

A CAUSAL-COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF READING INSTRUCTION
ON THE READING ACHIEVEMENT OF THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS IN TITLE I
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

Hamilton Elijah Smith

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2018

A CAUSAL-COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF READING INSTRUCTION
ON THE READING ACHIEVEMENT OF THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS IN TITLE I
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by Hamilton Elijah Smith

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2018

APPROVED BY:

David C. Nelson, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Vivian O. Jones, Ph.D., Committee Member

Michael Patrick, Ed.D., Committee Member

ABSTRACT

Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) allocates federal government funds to schools serving low-income families. Title I schools receive additional financial support to combat the impact of poverty on students' elementary and secondary education. This quantitative causal-comparative study examined the effect of reading instruction on third-grade students' reading achievement score. The study included Title I elementary schools ($n=4$) within an urban school district in the Southeastern region of the United States. Participants included a convenience sampling of third-grade students ($N=340$). The researcher collected anonymous archived reading achievement scores from the Renaissance Star 360® reading assessment administered by Independent School District (pseudonym). Pre-test and post-test reading achievement scores were analyzed using an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The results of the ANCOVA indicated a statistically significant difference between the reading achievement scores of third-grade students who participated in guided reading instruction and third-grade students who participated in whole-group reading instruction while controlling for pre-test reading achievement scores. The findings rejected the null hypothesis. Implications of the findings were examined alongside recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Title I, reading achievement, reading instruction, guided reading instruction.

Copyright © 2018
Hamilton Elijah Smith
All Rights Reserved

Dedication

“To the Creator and all my ancestors whose shoulders I stand on, those known and unknown, I say thank you for your spiritual guidance and wisdom. I am merely an extension of those Africans who decided to survive and triumph in a hostile place” (Bridges, 2004, p. v).

To each scholar, I teach and each life I touch, past, present, and future, I wholeheartedly dedicate this doctoral dissertation to your continued scholarship and success.

In loving memory of two transformational African-American educational leaders: Joseph Frederick Smith and Randall Deladio Ponder, whose leadership, resilience and poise helped to guide the Henry County Board of Education through racial desegregation. Mr. J.F. Smith and Mr. Ponder served their community with invaluable grit and wisdom, in a trying time. Their work-ethic, sincerity and professional knowledge is admirable. I am forever fortunate for their record of results!

Acknowledgments

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7, King James Version). I feel like David when he said, “If it had not been for the Lord who was on our side...” (Psalm 124, King James Version). Hence, I must first give honor to God!

I acknowledge my family for their eternal love, understanding, and support throughout my professional and educational pursuits. Specifically, I give thanks to my grandparents: Mary Frances Ransom and Roosevelt Ransom, Jr. You all inherently believed in my capacity to achieve great things through my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Continued thanks extend to my mother Wanda Denise Ransom, sister LaSondra Rochelle White, and host of aunts, uncles, and cousins for their prayers and words of wisdom.

I acknowledge my dissertation committee chair Dr. David C. Nelson, dissertation committee members Dr. Vivian O. Jones and Dr. Michael Patrick, and research consultant Dr. Philip Alsup for providing feedback, commendation, and accountability. Moreover, I recognize my professional colleagues and friends who have innately served as extended family and faithful supporters of my doctoral research.

Thank you, Mr. Gabriel J. Wiley and the Henry County Schools for providing opportunities for me to grow as an instructional leader and scholar-practitioner. Finally, I sincerely thank the faculty and staff of McDonogh #35 High School, the New Orleans Public Schools, and the University of New Orleans for giving me a chance and hiring me as an aspiring leader committed to the business of educating all children.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	3
Dedication	5
Acknowledgments	6
Table of Contents	7
List of Tables	9
List of Figures	10
List of Abbreviations	11
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	12
Overview	12
Background	12
Problem Statement	18
Purpose Statement.....	20
Significance of the Study	21
Research Question	24
Definitions.....	24
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	26
Overview	26
Theoretical Framework.....	26
Related Literature.....	34
Summary	58
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	60
Overview.....	60

Design	60
Research Question	61
Null Hypothesis	61
Participants and Setting.....	62
Instrumentation	67
Procedures.....	69
Data Analysis	71
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	73
Overview.....	73
Research Question	73
Null Hypothesis	73
Descriptive Statistics.....	74
Results.....	76
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS	84
Overview.....	84
Discussion.....	84
Implications.....	88
Limitations	90
Recommendations for Future Research	91
REFERENCES	93
APPENDIX A.....	132
APPENDIX B	133
APPENDIX C.....	134

List of Tables

Table 1. Comparing reading level expectations based on Lexile ranges	37
Table 2. Gender identity for the sample.....	62
Table 3. Racial/ethnic identity for the sample at each study site.....	63
Table 4. Student enrollment and gender identity for the overall population at each study site	65
Table 5. Racial/ethnic identity for the overall population at each study site.....	66
Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Test Reading Achievement Scores for All Participants ..	75
Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Post-Test Reading Achievement Scores for All Participants.	75
Table 8. Test of Normality via the Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test.....	78
Table 9. Test of Homogeneity of Slopes	81
Table 10. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances.....	81
Table 11. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	83

List of Figures

Figure 1. The systems relationship between the components of reading comprehension and reading achievement.	44
Figure 2. Box-and-Whisker plot for the control variable.	76
Figure 3. Box-and-Whisker plot for the dependent variable.	77
Figure 4. Pre-Test Frequency Histogram for the sample.....	79
Figure 5. Post-Test Frequency Histogram for the sample	79
Figure 6. Scatter plot for the covariate and dependent variable for both groups.....	80

List of Abbreviations

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

Computer-Adaptive Test (CAT)

Direct Instruction (DI)

Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS)

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

English Language Learners (ELLs)

Grade Equivalent (GE)

Independent School District (ISD)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (KS)

Lexile (L)

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

Percentile Rank (PR)

Reading First Impact Study (RFIS)

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Round-Robin Reading (RRR)

Scaled Score (SS)

Sociocultural Theory of Human Learning (SCT)

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Renaissance Star 360® reading assessment (STAR)

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The causal-comparative study purported to test the sociocultural theory of human learning that compared the instructional context of reading instruction to reading achievement for third-grade students. Chapter 1 provides an introduction that establishes the background of the study, problem statement, and purpose statement, the significance of the study, the research question, and definitions.

Background

Booker T. Washington stated, “If you can’t read, it’s going to be hard to realize dreams” (Freeman, 2014, p. 511). The path towards the “American Dream” is typically paved through the successful attainment of, at least, a high school education (Seider, Gillmor, & Rabinowicz, 2010). Students from low-income families that fail to read on grade-level by third grade are six times less likely to graduate high school on time (Hernandez, 2012). Eastman (2016) suggests that academic performance, related to reading achievement, is increasingly significant as school accountability measures and college and career-readiness become universal expectations within public schools. Thus, reading achievement in the United States is utilized as a force for social, political, academic, and economic advancement.

Within low-income communities, the capacity to capitalize on language, culture, and communication has been stifled by an incongruence with educational expectations. For instance, a child living in poverty is at-risk for lack of early language and literacy skill development, within and beyond the home (Curry, Reeves, & McIntyre, 2016). According to Curry, Reeves, and McIntyre (2016), the connection between schools and the communities they serve provides a catalyst for literacy practices that can improve reading and overall academic achievement.

Historical Overview

The historical context of the study is rooted in the relationship between literacy and public schools. Reading instruction has been deeply woven into school curriculums to serve the needs of all learners (Gaston, Martinez, & Martin, 2016). Literacy skills are a crucial component of academic achievement in all content areas. The capacity to think critically, read, write, and verbally communicate impacts students within and beyond the classroom.

Likewise, an increasingly more competitive and globalized economy has necessitated a shift towards literacy skills that are prerequisite for students' college and career readiness (Cook, 2015). In contrast, traditional vocational education sought a narrow aim of producing persons prepared to reproduce capital (Eastman, 2016). Schools are now required to prepare students, beyond proficiency in literacy, towards an application of scholarship essential for living within a pluralistic society (Eastman, 2016). The mandate for college and career-readiness has shifted school curriculums and state standards over the last decade.

The school accountability movement has demonstrated continuous school reform across the United States. These changes in public policy have developed a pressing need for instructional practices which yield consistently higher levels of academic achievement within public schools. While accountability measures vary from state to state, most school reform efforts have implemented specific metrics for academic success, teacher effectiveness, and school performance overall (Whitesell, 2015).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) ushered in a wave of transformations for public schools within the United States. NCLB was a revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that mandated higher standards for teacher quality and held schools accountable for the educational progress of their students. These requirements meant that schools had to

annually report their progress (United States Department of Education, n.d.). Chiefly, public schools are held accountable for the academic performance of students. State-mandated standardized assessments evidence this performance. Increasingly, an emphasis on college and career-readiness, rigorous state standards, and continued efforts to increase accountability has created a challenging climate for student outcomes. Per Wong (2008), the influx of public school reforms has shifted school accountability from compliance towards performance-based measures (e.g., standardized assessments).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) created standardized measures for academic achievement. Students' reading achievement scores and mathematics achievement scores have become the most common measures of student proficiency. Most significantly, NCLB required that students read at or above grade level by the end of third grade (United States Department of Education, n.d.). NCLB established the Reading First Program and a subsequent study which evaluated federally-funded initiatives to improve reading achievement (Gamse, Bloom, Kemple, & Jacob, 2008). The Reading First Program issued grants to states (i.e., the Reading First Initiative).

The Reading First Initiative targeted the highest funding priority towards low-income student populations and those students demonstrating the most significant academic need for reading support (Gamse et al., 2008). The Reading First Impact Study (RFIS) indicated that the grant increased total class time spent on reading instruction while correlating with no improvement in students' reading comprehension. Conclusively, the RFIS substantiated a need for further research which analyzed instructional practices and instructional contexts associated with observed impacts on student reading achievement score (Gamse et al., 2008).

Society-at-Large

The social context of the study involves the issue of socioeconomic status, college and career opportunities, and the connection between poverty and public schools. Title I schools are public schools within the United States that receive additional federal funding based on the increased proportion of students served from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds (National Title I Association, n.d.). Title I schools are allocated additional resources to support the arduous task of educating students who, overwhelmingly, qualify for free and reduced-price school meals.

Students from low-income households enter school with academic challenges (Lacour & Tissington, 2011). For example, a student reared in a community which lacks access to quality healthcare and housing, affordable childcare, or adequate levels of employment is more likely to have deficiencies in academic performance. Research has shown a correlation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement (Harry & Klingner, 2007; Neito, 2010; Rothstein, 2004).

While colleges and employers increasingly seek qualified candidates, students from low-income households have decreased prospects. Lower levels of academic achievement cause the scarcity of employment opportunities among socioeconomically disadvantaged populations. Bergeson (2006) found that students from low-income households score below average on standardized assessments. Bergeson's (2006) findings suggest a substantial gap in achievement, regardless of race, for low-income students. Specifically, reading achievement is equally impacted by poverty status. Rowan (2004) reported that low-income students performed in the 30th percentile on the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study* (ECLS) reading assessment.

The social context of reading achievement expanded to economic empowerment and employability. Reardon (2013) concluded that the reading achievement gap between high-income individuals and low-income individuals has widened. “Largely gone are the manufacturing jobs that provided a middle-class wage without a college degree” (Reardon, 2013, p. 13). Autor, Katz, and Kearney (2008) suggested that education is the primary vehicle towards economic success.

Instructional practices and contexts which improve reading achievement scores have the potential to increase job prospects; thereby impacting the cyclical effect of generational poverty. Principally, reading ability is a determinant of socioeconomic status (Ritchie & Bates, 2013). Subsidized employment programs direct resources and job opportunities to low-income families. Nonetheless, these welfare programs offer a limited reach contingent upon state or federal funding and private sector participation (Farrell, Elkin, Broadus, & Bloom, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

A broad theoretical context undergirds reading instruction. Foremost, literacy encompasses a myriad of skills necessary to operationalize tasks within and beyond the classroom. Students must possess the capacity to read, write, and reason within academic and non-academic contexts. Ferrandino and Tirozzi (2004), stated that “underdeveloped literacy skills” are the number one reason why students fail (p. 1). Effective reading instruction should adapt to the unique challenges and opportunities incumbent within the experiences of the 21st-century learner.

The sociocultural theory of human learning (SCT) contends that the context of learning, particularly those related to social and cultural surroundings, provide the foundation for human intelligence. Vygotsky (1986) argued that learning is a social process. Hence, literacy instruction

capitalized on Vygotsky's (1986) theory by implementing numerous pedagogical practices that grouped students by ability levels (e.g., high, average, and below-average). While this strategy utilized the social context of small-group instruction alongside homogeneous grouping, traditional group assignments limit students as they progress towards higher levels of reading comprehension (Antonacci, 2000; Juel, 1988; Shannon, 1985). As a result, this pedagogical method constitutes a fixed ability grouping that is integral to whole-group reading instruction (Antonacci, 2000). The nature of this teaching seems to differentiate instruction based on the group's ability level. However, whole-group reading instruction, also referred to as the traditional 'basal approach,' can be scripted and unresponsive to the individual literacy needs of each student (Antonacci, 2000). Applying Vygotsky's (1986) theoretical framework, guided reading instruction offers a new pedagogical model "based upon their capacity for learning to read; that is, they receive instruction within their zone of proximal development" (Antonacci, 2000, p. 32).

Effective reading instruction meets the needs of individual readers, regardless of cultural or linguistic background (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006). This revelation should maintain validity within all instructional contexts for teaching reading. Historically, the theories supporting reading instruction have transitioned to welcome small-group reading instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Specifically, educators have come to recognize the need for differentiated instruction across the curriculum.

Researchers developed guided reading instruction to address the stigma of previous grouping mechanisms, related to reading ability. In contrast to traditional methods, guided reading instruction provides dynamic, flexible homogeneous grouping by reading ability. As students' reading ability changes, their grouping changes. While the term 'guided reading' may

suggest a restricted literacy experience, guided reading instruction integrates critical thinking, written and oral language development. The context of reading instruction, facilitated through guided reading instruction, supports deeper reading comprehension and the use of assessment strategies to inform and modify learning experiences (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Problem Statement

Research in the area of reading instruction has tended to focus on macro-level factors related to reading achievement (Swanson et al., 2017). Macro-level factors include topics such as access to early childhood education, summer reading programs, and Response to Intervention (RTI) curricula which address learning deficits through tiered instructional interventions and progress monitoring (Blanton, 2015; Gersten, Newman-Gonchar, Haymond, & Dimino, 2017; Smith & Foorman, 2015; Walker, 2015). While Allor, Mathes, Roberts, Cheatham, and Otaiba (2014) suggested that converging evidence recommends early reading instruction to reduce or eliminate reading struggles, Cervetti and Heibert (2015) concluded that reading instruction must emphasize knowledge development to improve reading achievement.

Gammon and Collins (2016) evaluated how early literacy skill development impacted reading achievement. However, Gammon and Collins's (2016) study suggested that further research should explore all aspects of literacy, not merely phonics and phonological awareness skills. Several studies (e.g., Adelson, Dickinson, & Cunningham, 2016; Crosnoe, Benner, & Davis-Kean, 2016; Kwiatkowska-White, Kirby, & Lee, 2016; Rjosk et al., 2014) failed to examine all aspects of reading achievement specifically (e.g., phonemic awareness, reading fluency, reading comprehension, etc.). Furthermore, previous studies did not compare Title I schools to other Title I schools or examine reading achievement distinguished by the type of reading instruction delivered within regular education classrooms.

Considerable attention has been given to how effective reading instruction affects student achievement (Pressley, Billman, Perry, Reffitt, & Reynolds, 2015). Nonetheless, Chiang et al. (2017) argued that previous studies examined how reading instruction narrowly targeted specific skills and impacted limited outcomes (e.g., how vocabulary instruction affected vocabulary acquisition). Chiang et al. (2017) suggested that further research examine how reading instruction changes the overall outcome of reading comprehension. Furthermore, Lipp and Helfrich (2016) recommended implementing guided reading instruction to support balanced literacy and all components of reading comprehension (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary). Powell, Cantrell, and Correll (2017) argued against the National Reading Panel's practice of discrediting research "that examined the sociocultural dimensions of literacy" and thereby ignoring the research in support of balanced literacy (p. 94).

Brown and Green (2014) and Lipman (2015) revealed Title I schools are mandated to provide evidence-based instructional strategies and programming, yet many urban Title I schools fail to actualize continuous school improvement. Even still, students' success in reading correlates with achievement across the curriculum (Kendeou, Broek, Helder & Karlsson, 2014). Despite targeted instructional interventions, parent involvement mandates, and additional federal funding, Title I schools typically represent lower levels of achievement in comparison to non-Title I public schools (Evans & Radina, 2014; Harris & Butaud, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Lacour & Tissington, 2011). The problem is, despite findings which correlate reading instruction and reading achievement, further empirical research was needed to determine whether guided reading instruction or whole-group reading instruction effectively improve reading achievement for elementary students within high poverty public schools.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to compare the instructional context of reading instruction to reading achievement for third-grade students. The study examined reading achievement among public schools serving socioeconomically disadvantaged populations. The study used a quantitative causal-comparative (non-experimental) research design. The setting for the study included Title I elementary schools ($n=4$) located in an urban school district in the Southeastern region of the United States.

The independent variable was defined as reading instruction and had two levels, guided reading instruction or whole-group reading instruction. Reading instruction is the act of teaching vocabulary and comprehension alongside phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency (Berkeley, Regan, Dimitrov, Guckert, & Ray, 2016). Guided reading instruction is an instructional strategy in which students receive small group reading instruction amongst peers with similar levels of reading proficiency (Delacruz, 2014; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Whole-group reading instruction is an instructional strategy in which all students in a class collectively receive the same direct instruction (Baker et al., 2016).

The dependent variable was defined as post-test reading achievement score, and the control variable of pre-test reading achievement score was controlled in this study. Dorsey (2015) described reading achievement scores as quantitative values (i.e., natural numbers) which represent a student's level of proficient performance in reading. For this study, the Renaissance Star 360® reading assessment (STAR) was used as the instrument. STAR automatically calculates a mean scale score which permits comparison of performance across grade levels. Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2016b) stated: "a scaled score is calculated based on the difficulty of questions and the number of correct responses" (p. 2).

Independent School District (pseudonym) administered the STAR three times during the 2017-2018 school year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) to measure growth in students' reading achievement. For this study, the researcher used Fall 2017 STAR scores as the pre-test reading achievement score and Spring 2018 STAR scores as the post-test reading achievement score. Participants' pre-test reading achievement score was assigned as the covariate to improve the ability to find a statistically significant difference between groups by reducing within-group error variance (Gall et al., 2007; Green & Salkind, 2013; Warner, 2013).

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study provided implications for educational leadership, curriculum and instruction, and public policy. An analysis of the instructional context of reading instruction offered empirical evidence informing curriculum theory, instructional strategies and school climate. Allen, Grigsby, and Peters (2015) claimed that school climate promotes school effectiveness. Zenkov et al. (2013) argued that culturally relevant literacy practices help students achieve in school. By testing the sociocultural theory of human learning, the researcher established further evidence to substantiate or refute the theoretical framework for guided reading instruction. Additionally, educational leaders desire to know the effectiveness of instructional practices as it relates to measurable student learning outcomes (e.g., reading achievement score). Owoh (2016) found that teacher effectiveness informs students' perceptions, academic achievement, and instructional supervision. Hence, academic achievement inherently connects to pedagogy.

Guided reading instruction offers a new pedagogical model targeting students' "capacity for learning to read" (Antonacci, 2000, p. 32). Guided reading offers explicit instruction in skills that improve reading fluency and comprehension. Instruction is provided in a context which

affords scaffolding and multiple opportunities to practice literacy skills. For example, “they receive instruction within their zone of proximal development” (Antonacci, 2000, p. 32).

Gaffner, Johnson, Torres-Elias, and Dryden (2014) suggested further research which utilized guided reading to improve the reading skills of elementary students. The study purports to test the application of Vygotsky’s (1986) theory in two distinct instructional contexts: whole-group instruction and guided reading instruction.

The findings of the study can be employed to modify or adapt current reading instruction. Latham (2013) argued that 21st-century learners needed to experience reading instruction which contests normative instructional practices. Crow and Castello (2016) posited that such instruction should be informed by culture and the dispositions of elementary school children. Therefore, instructional contexts may be changed to reflect new insight related to the relationship between pedagogy and student performance (i.e., reading achievement score).

The general populations served by Title I schools can benefit from the reading instruction which relates to closing the academic achievement gap. Title I schools serve a disproportionately high percentage of students with low socioeconomic status (SES). Sousa and Armor (2016) argued Title I’s compensatory program and level of funding is insufficient to close the academic achievement gap singlehandedly. Public schools are not improved through additional funding. Funding must align with research-based, evidence-based instructional strategies. For students within Title I schools, academic achievement expands to economic empowerment and employability prospects. Research has consistently shown a correlation between socioeconomic status and academic performance (Harry & Klingner, 2007; Neito, 2010; Rothstein, 2004). Miles and Stipek (2006) posited that the academic struggles of some students lead to disruptive behaviors within and beyond the classroom. However, effective reading instruction and

instructional context can impact student engagement, student behavior, and academic achievement (O'Neill & Geoghegan, 2012).

The study was important to public school districts, in general, and urban Title I schools like those conveniently sampled in the study. For instance, school climate has become a significant educational issue that can be considered the “heart and soul” of a campus (Freiberg & Stein, 1999, p. 11). The school climate observed within urban schools presents a challenge for the instructional context desirable for effective teaching and learning (Grace & Harrington, 2015). Implications of the study can be operationalized to develop teacher evaluation tools and professional learning opportunities. More effective instructional practices correlate to teacher recruitment and retention within urban settings (He, Cooper, & Tangredi, 2015).

Addressing the issue of reading achievement and instructional context can be a constituent catalyst for more efficiently producing college and career-ready high school graduates. Students’ proficiency in reading and writing impacts their success in society (Shaw & Hurst, 2012). Preparation for post-secondary success must begin within early childhood education. Schools are well-positioned to promote college attendance, and the instructional context of schools affects students’ post-secondary outcomes (Engberg & Wolniak, 2010).

As school reforms seek to reach political, social, economic, and educational aims, reading instruction should reflect theory and practice, reading and writing development; the overarching tenets of balanced literacy (Shaw & Hurst, 2012). Researchers have extensively contended that proficiency in literacy relates to success beyond reading achievement (Bitter, O’Day, Gubbins, & Socias, 2009). However, limited findings exist to substantiate guided reading instruction in the context, climate, and culture of Title I schools, many of which pose additional impediments to overall school improvement. Marchand-Martella, Martella, and Lambert (2015) argued guided

reading instruction can support a schoolwide Title I instructional program while also addressing the needs of students who exhibit learning and behavioral challenges.

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the reading achievement scores of third-grade students who participate in guided reading instruction and third-grade students who participate in whole-group reading instruction while controlling for pre-test reading achievement scores?

Definitions

The following terms pertinent to this study were defined:

1. *Balanced literacy* – whole-language and skill-based knowledge that integrates phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (Shaw & Hurst, 2012).
2. *Guided reading instruction* – small-group instruction, focused on non-fiction or fiction texts, which provides differentiation to support students in developing literacy skills (e.g., reading comprehension) (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).
3. *Instructional context* – factors and circumstances, external to the learner, that formulate an educational environment (Turner & Meyer, 2000).
4. *Learning* – a process whereby a person acquires an ability to perform an action or to take part in an event, which they previously could not do, at the end of a specific activity (Kara, 2010).
5. *Literacy* – the control and use of language in various contexts and discourses (Gee, 1989).
6. *Phoneme* – an individual unit of sound that has a specific meaning; phonemes are made either through individual alphabet letters or a combination of alphabet letters (Harper, 2011).
7. *Phonemic Awareness* – the ability to manipulate and break down words into their individual units or phonemes and the ability to correctly pronounce each individual unit or phoneme

within a word (Ehri et al., 2001; Fabre-Merchán, P., Torres-Jara, G., Andrade-Dominguez, F., Ortiz-Zurita, M.J., & Alvarez-Muñoz, P., 2017; Goldenberg et al., 2014).

8. *Phonics* – the concept of associating specific sounds with specific alphabet letters or phonemes (Lu, 2010).
9. *Reading* – the ability for individuals to understand, use, and reflect on written texts, “to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in society” (OECD, 2000, p. 18).
10. *Reading Fluency* – the ability to read a word or set of words with speed, precision, and prosody (Stevens, Walker, & Vaughn, 2017).
11. *Vocabulary* – words and their associated meanings (Henriksen, 2009).
12. *Whole-group reading instruction* – teacher-led instruction where the teacher provides direct instruction, to the entire class, focusing on the explicit modeling of reading comprehension strategies (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The causal-comparative study purported to test the sociocultural theory of human learning that compared the instructional context of reading instruction to reading achievement for third-grade students. Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework which guides the research and examines related literature in the areas of Title I schools, reading instruction, and components of reading comprehension (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary).

Theoretical Framework

Within the 21st century, the ability to read is an essential skill for academic success (Levine, Ferenz, & Reves, 2000). However, an examination of the theoretical foundations of reading instruction reveals limited opportunities for readers' meaning-making within instructional contexts. Readers utilize background knowledge (i.e., schemata) to understand the reading material (French, Ellsworth, & Amoroso, 1995; Jitendra, Dupuis, Star, & Rodriguez, 2016). The instructional strategies of many teachers of reading illustrate a lack of opportunity for students to access relevant literature. This phenomenon is especially prevalent in instructional contexts that lack adequate financial resources or print-rich environments (e.g., impoverished neighborhoods).

Students typically access print and electronic information in schools; some individuals may limit certain types of interpretations over others (Appleman, 2000; Bernstein, 2014; Probst, 1987). For example, Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, and Henry (2017) articulated the changing nature of literacy:

Thus, to have been literate yesterday, in a world defined primarily by relatively static book technologies, does not ensure that one is fully literate today where we encounter new technologies such as Google docs, Skype, iMovie, Contribute, Basecamp, Dropbox, Facebook, Google, Foursquare, Chrome, educational video games, or thousands of mobile apps. To be literate tomorrow will be defined by even newer technologies that have yet to appear and even newer discourses and social practices that will be created to meet future needs. Thus, when we speak of new literacies, we mean that literacy is not just new today; it becomes new every day of our lives (p. 1).

Leu et al.'s (2017) perspective on literature and literacy have substantiated a variety of instructional strategies and techniques (i.e., pedagogy) to teach reading. Nonetheless, the range of reading instruction and its related impact on reading achievement have both a theoretical and conceptual significance.

Chall's *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (1967) was an early seminal work investigating reading instruction (as cited in Konza, 2014). Additionally, Gammon and Collins (2016) evaluated how early literacy skill development impacted reading achievement. However, Gammon and Collins's (2016) study suggested that further research should explore all aspects of literacy, not merely phonics and phonological awareness skills. This study will expand upon previous research by substantiating reading instruction as a correlate to reading achievement scores and examining reading instruction within the distinct context of socioeconomically disadvantaged populations (i.e., Title I schools).

Sociocultural Theory of Human Learning

The sociocultural theory of human learning (SCT) contends that the context of learning, particularly settings heavily influenced by socialization or culture, provide the basis for human

intelligence (Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015). Foremost, sociocultural settings offer humans the catalyst to receive, process, and interact with information. Vygotsky (1986) argued that learning is a dynamic social process. SCT views human learning as a social process which includes the interaction of self-regulation, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1986). Therefore, principles which influence reading instruction have, in part, capitalized from SCT. For instance, reading instruction, which targets reading comprehension skills, utilizes practices which routinely involve the ability grouping (high, average, and below-average) of students (Christopher et al., 2016).

However, more recent scholarship counteracts the efficacy of ability grouping as an isolated instructional practice. While this strategy utilizes the social context of small group instruction, alongside homogeneous grouping, traditional group assignments limit students as they progress towards higher levels of reading comprehension (Antonacci, 2000; Juel, 1988; Shannon, 1985). Thus, homogeneous ability grouping, as a pedagogical method, constitutes fixed grouping similarly found within whole-group reading instruction (Antonacci, 2000). Fixed ability groupings differ from whole-group instruction due to the size of the group. In both cases, students receive the same within-group instruction. The nature of this practice may provide avenues to differentiate instruction based on the group's ability level. However, whole-group reading instruction, also referred to as the traditional 'basal approach,' can be scripted and unresponsive to the individual literacy needs of each student (Antonacci, 2000).

Applying Vygotsky's (1986) theoretical framework, guided reading instruction offers a different pedagogical model targeting students' "capacity for learning to read" (Antonacci, 2000, p. 32). Guided reading offers explicit instruction in skills that improve reading fluency, comprehension, and expression. Instruction takes place in a context which affords scaffolding

and multiple opportunities to practice literacy skills. Specifically, “they receive instruction within their zone of proximal development” (Antonacci, 2000, p. 32).

Effective reading instruction meets the needs of individual readers, regardless of cultural or linguistic background (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006). Therefore, despite the context of human learning, effective reading instruction should yield higher levels of reading achievement. This revelation should maintain validity within all instructional contexts found within public schools. Historically, the theories supporting reading instruction have transitioned to welcome new approaches to small group reading instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). For example, educators have come to recognize the need for differentiated instruction across the curriculum.

Guided reading instruction emerged to address the stigma of previous grouping mechanisms, related to reading ability (Hudson & Walker, 2017). Offering a practical application of ZPD and scaffolding, guided reading brought to life many of Vygotsky’s (1978) revelations. In contrast to traditional approaches to reading instruction, guided reading instruction provides dynamic, flexible homogeneous grouping by reading ability. As students’ reading ability change, their grouping changes. While the term ‘guided reading’ may suggest a limited literacy experience, guided reading instruction integrates critical thinking, written and oral language development. Guided reading instruction, as a context of reading instruction, supports deeper reading comprehension and the use of assessment strategies to inform learning experiences (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Self-Regulation. Day and Connor (2017) argued that children with stronger self-regulation exhibit higher levels of academic and social success within schools. The concept of self-regulation is a critical aspect of SCT. SCT primarily proposed that learning take place

through social interaction. However, this contention did not negate the important dynamic of individual will, desire, or perspective. Vygotsky (1986) suggested that humans indeed participate in their learning; this act is known as self-regulation. Self-regulation is an aspect of metacognition which fosters human control. Self-regulation relates to humans' ability to solve problems and maintain autonomy linguistically. Devries (2000) noted that self-regulation is a mechanism that emerges after humans have confronted object or environmental stimuli and the regulation of more knowledgeable persons in a social activity.

Self-regulation, as a tiered process, is further explored as autonomy within human functioning (Antón, 1999; Mitchell & Myles, 1998). Dongyu, Fanyu, and Wanyi (2013) affirmed that self-regulation is strengthened by providing children with choices in their early development. Birgisdóttir, Gestsdóttir, and Thorsdóttir (2015) determined that self-regulation is a behavioral mechanism that plays a critical role in learning to read. Cognitive self-regulation contributes to reading competence (Smith, Borkowski, & Whitman, 2008). Furthermore, the skill of self-regulation is a tool which fosters early literacy development by promoting metacognitive awareness of reading strategies (Turkyilmaz, 2015).

Zone of Proximal Development. Within Vygotsky's (1986) theory, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) has a widespread influence on reading instruction and instruction overall. Lantolf and Appel (1994) stated that ZPD was a conceptual place whereby people transferred from regulation by others to self-regulation. Dongyu et al. (2013) concluded that Vygotsky's definition suffices for contemporary application. ZPD is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration

with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Hence, learning creates ZPD; a striation of two levels of learner development (Dongyu et al., 2013).

Literacy encompasses a myriad of skills necessary to operationalize tasks within and beyond the classroom. Students must possess the capacity to read, write, and reason within academic and non-academic contexts. The strategy used to deliver reading instruction is related to educational outcomes. Through ZPD students receive ‘help’ to reach a new level of inquiry or a more in-depth level of knowledge and application (Danish, Saleh, Andrade, & Bryan, 2017). Clarà (2017) further suggested that instruction or ‘help’ did not necessarily push human development. Instead, help with the ZPD guides rather than drives human learning (Clarà, 2017). Previous research implied that ZPD inherently orchestrates itself through the assistance of more knowledgeable persons in a social activity (Devries, 2000). ZPD as a teaching tool requires a gradual release of responsibility to support autonomy and self-regulation (Wass & Golding, 2014).

Applied to literacy development and pedagogy, ZPD requires effective assessment strategies and assessment uses. These practices assist teachers in delivering appropriate intervention or remediation based on students’ actual level of development (Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010). Within various instructional contexts, students may present vastly different levels of foundational knowledge (Armstrong, 2015). Per Roberson (2017), teachers can maximize student learning by meeting students where they are, academically and socially, and offering support which builds their level of independence. Additionally, ZPD focuses teaching and learning on the needs of students by strengthening learner autonomy (Panhwar, Ansari, & Ansari, 2016). ZPD, itself, is a non-static cognitive and social state which progresses because of self-regulation and scaffolding.

Scaffolding. SCT is conceptually incomplete without the support of learners by more knowledgeable persons in a social activity (Devries, 2000). Scaffolding is an instructional technique which aligns with the premise of learner development established within the ZPD. Ellis (2004) defined scaffolding as a process where one person helps another person to perform a task that they cannot achieve without assistance. Reza and Mahmood (2013) posited that scaffolding is an instructional strategy that allows teachers to mediate student learning. Despite the instructional context, “scaffolds are temporarily used to help and guide students to learn and practice skills” (Salem, 2017, p. 2). Moreover, scaffolding strategies are paramount in literacy skills; literacy skills are specific tasks which build reading comprehension (Huggins & Edwards, 2011).

Within the development of reading fluency, teachers provide scaffolding after appropriately modeling reading skills. Kuhn, Rasinski, and Zimmerman (2014) concurred regarding the use of echo and choral reading to help struggling readers become proficient. Scaffolding strategies that afford learners the opportunity to repeatedly read texts have distinct benefits for reading fluency and comprehension (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003).

Overall, adults play a significant role in scaffolding children’s learning (O’Neill & Geoghegan, 2012). While scaffolding strategies typically support human learning, Park (2014) found that emotional scaffolding increases learner engagement and achievement. Within this context, scaffolding facilitates positive emotional experiences which promote the learning process (Meyer & Turner, 2007). Englishtina (2015) developed a sociocultural model for scaffolding which developed children’s literacy abilities (e.g., speech). Utilizing Vygotsky’s (1978) theoretical revelations in literacy, scaffolding has influenced many aspects of pedagogy across the curriculum. The employment of pedagogical strategies in scaffolding is useful when

teachers understand the strengths, weaknesses, and overall needs of a learner and accommodate for learner attributes accordingly (Zurek, Torquati, & Acar, 2014).

Cooperative Learning Theory

Cooperative learning represents a conceptualization which posits that people learn from others, their interactions, teamwork, and communications (Fullan, 2009). Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1993, p. 5) defined cooperative learning as “the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning.” According to Tran (2013), positive student learning outcomes take place when cooperative learning strategies occur within instructional contexts.

Johnson and Johnson (2013) collectively developed five principles to guide cooperative learning. However, Jacobs and Kimura (2013), expanded upon those first principles to highlight essential factors for implementation in the classroom. Farrell and Jacobs (2016) suggested that cooperative learning is based on heterogeneous grouping, the explicit teaching of collaborative skills, group autonomy, maximum peer interaction, individual accountability, and positive interdependence. Moreover, Farrell and Jacobs (2016) discovered that teachers more efficiently implement cooperative learning strategies, amongst their students, when teachers have themselves engaged in cooperative learning experiences.

The validity of cooperative learning theory is found in various empirical studies (Chatila & Al Husseiny, 2017; Meng, 2017; Yoruk, 2016). In fact, Han (2015) substantiated the conceptual framework of cooperative learning by supporting Sharan’s (1999) revelation. Positive interdependence is the foundation for cooperative learning alongside elements of individual accountability, interpersonal skills, promotive interaction and group processing (Han, 2015). Guided reading instruction and whole-group reading instruction have adopted essential elements

from cooperative learning theory. Specifically, students must recognize learning objectives within the classroom and orient themselves to various tasks which allow them to accomplish their work (Han, 2015). Both small-group and whole-group instructional contexts afford opportunities where a learner may find the instructional material too difficult or too easy. Despite this weakness of cooperative learning theory, cooperative learning has a significant effect on students' achievement (Chatila & Al Husseiny, 2017).

Related Literature

Literacy in the United States of America

Gross (2010) confirmed that literacy skills require learners to connect ideas across the curriculum to establish more meaningful, relevant educational experiences. As the context of information changes, learners continue to apply literacy skills: critical thinking, problem-solving, and the capacity to decipher and analyze interdisciplinary concepts (Gross, 2010). Literacy traditions contend that literacy is restricted to print literature. Anderson (1977) posited that knowledge could readily be extracted from literature and that printed language possessed a meaning independent from the author, speaker, reader, or listener.

Literacy has a longstanding history that spans the earliest pictographic writings in 3,500 B.C. traced to ancient Sumer (Mesopotamia), the first published books in Rome, and the invention of the printing press in the 15th century (Perry, 2015). Alongside practical and academic reasons, literacy rates within colonial America were significantly impacted by religious practices which sought spiritual edification (Donohue, 2001; Lynch, 2011). These historical milestones ushered in a wave of advancements in reading and writing.

Moreover, the Industrial Revolution made paper and printing cost more feasible, thereby increasing access to print literature, especially within public schools in the United States

(Gallman, 1988). Most significantly, a keen focus on reading meant that students, and adults alike, were held increasingly accountable for the ability to be functionally literate across the world (Patrinos & Sakellariou, 2015). Hence, Boltzmann et al. (2017) defined illiteracy as the inability to read or write. Even still, a more contemporary definition of illiteracy highlights an individual's capacity to sufficiently operate within society (Ortlieb, Young, & Majors, 2016).

Illiteracy statistics reveal the disproportionate percentage of African-American persons who were illiterate compared to White persons in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993 Snyder, 1993; Vágvölgyi, Coldea, Dresler, Schrader, & Nuerk, 2016). This gap in literacy rates found a daunting institutional roadblock when literacy tests were implemented to inhibit the civil and voting rights of African-Americans. *Lassiter v. Northampton County Board of Elections* (1959) validated the use of literacy tests within Jim Crow laws, establishing that such tactics did not violate the 14th or 15th amendments to the United States Constitution.

Gerber (2016) believed that reading ability tests, as government practice and policy, allowed public institutions to select persons whom they desired to vote. Essentially, literacy tests were a tool for voter suppression and immigration restriction. The unethical political use of literacy tests ceased due to the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and the *Voting Rights Act of 1965*. Nonetheless, the precarious history of literacy constitutes aspects of disenfranchisement that linger today (Harris & Schroeder, 2013; Watson, 2009).

A Context for Reading Achievement and Title I Schools

Johnson (2015) suggested Title I was the most significant federal program related to education within the United States. Title I funds are allocated strategically to public schools serving a disproportionate number of students from low-income households. According to

Burney and Beilke (2008), the National School Lunch Program (i.e., the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch program) within the United States is a proxy indicator of poverty. For several decades, Title I sustained substantial support “to eliminate the educational disadvantage associated with poverty” (Johnson, 2015, p. 50).

Socioeconomic status represents a pivotal contributor to achievement gaps. It is unclear whether increased school spending substantively improves learning outcomes for students (Jackson, Johnson, & Persico, 2016). Notably, Cascio and Reber (2013) posited Title I funds had been a tool within public education policy to leverage school reforms (e.g., desegregation of public schools and adoption of school accountability measures). Furthermore, Fernández and López (2017), Fryer (2014), Vincent, Tobin, and Van Ryzin (2017) concluded that school climate, school culture, and parent involvement play a critical role in establishing an environment for academic achievement, in general, as well as reading achievement. Increased emphasis on academic achievement and literacy skills, specifically reading comprehension, provides a formidable purpose for studying the efficacy of reading instruction amongst low-income student demographics.

According to Tiernan and Kerins (2014), “the development of literacy in the mainstream class context requires a commitment on the part of teachers to consider alternatives to traditional pedagogical approaches (p. 45). Additionally, two dilemmas arise given the context of literacy instruction within the 21st-century: the use of conventional basal readers have waned in exchange for digital content, and more rigorous curricula standards emphasize higher levels of text complexity and higher levels of expected reading achievement (i.e., Lexile scores) at younger ages (Hiebert & Mesmer, 2013).

A study conducted by Wilkins et al. (2012) through the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2012) indicated:

This linguistic, theory-based method (Lexile Framework® for Reading) measures student reading comprehension and the reading difficulty of texts using a common scale unit called a Lexile (L), which ranges from 0L for emerging readers and beginning texts to 1700L for advanced readers and texts (MetaMetrics, Inc. n.d.). The Lexile measure of a book is calculated by parsing the text into 125-word slices and using a proprietary regression equation to assign a reading difficulty value to each slice based on word frequency and sentence length. Combining results across slices yields the overall Lexile measure for the book (p. 5).

Lexile scores correlate with a student’s ability to comprehend texts at an associated Lexile level. Throughout the United States, schools and education agencies continue to “raise the bar” for reading achievement (see Table 1). For example, students must enter elementary school with exposure to print-rich environments and phonological awareness.

Table 1

Comparing reading level expectations based on Lexile ranges

Grade Band	Previous Lexile Ranges	College and Career Ready Lexile Ranges
PreK-1	BR-420L	BR-530L
2-3	450L-725L	420L-820L
4-5	645L-845L	740L-1010L

Source: Achieve 3000 (n.d.).

Lexile ranges align with a specific grade level or grade band. Previous Lexile ranges have been increased to align with higher expectations for reading achievement and increased curricular rigor developed to improve students' college and career readiness.

While this study emphasizes factors internal to the Title I elementary school, constituent to reading achievement (i.e., pedagogy), Evans and Radina (2014) argued that “family, school, and community partnerships are a critical part of student achievement” (p. 107). Conversely, Cascio and Reber (2013) examined the effect of Title I on student achievement and concluded Title I had a marginal impact. In fact, Title I schools are often chosen to pilot school reform efforts while inherently marginalizing internally-generated curricula innovations and agency within struggling schools (Sturges, 2015).

School Climate within Title I Schools

An instructional context represents more than the elaborate modality in which instruction occurs (e.g., whole-group instruction versus small group instruction). Instructional context is positioned within the framework of school climate and school culture. For Title I schools, serving low-income households predominately, school climate can directly affect academic achievement. Still, Rumberger and Palardy (2004) believed that little is known about how school climate relates to the development of elementary students. According to Berkowitz, Moore, Astor, and Benbenishty (2017), supportive school climates can positively impact academic achievement.

School climate is defined as a compilation of a school's level of safety, interpersonal relationship, and classroom environment (i.e., student and teacher behavior, cleanliness, appropriate facilities, etc.). Moreover, school climate also relates to the degree to which a school systemically addresses improvement of teaching and learning (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, &

Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). John (2017) defined school climate as the learning environment and working environment of a school. Historically, researchers have classified school climate as the personality, feelings, or mood of a school (Wang, Berry, & Swearer, 2013). For example, Rudasill, Snyder, Levinson, and Adelson (2017) collectively developed the Systems View of School Climate which determined that school climate amounts to the perceptions held by students, stakeholders, and school personnel about a school's environment.

Title I schools, representing a disproportionate enrollment of low-income students, may be stereotyped as "poor" schools with hostile school climates. This phenomenon is linked to the negative connotation associated with poverty and the negative connotation associated with the words "welfare" and "poor" within the United States (Smith, 1987). However, Title I schools vary in racial/ethnic demographics as well as the type of school community (e.g., rural, urban, suburban). This variation in school communities coincides with an inherent difference in school climate for Title I schools. Behavioral and cultural norms in one community are viewed in a qualitatively different manner in other communities.

Regardless of variations in how persons perceive school climate, poverty may undesirably contribute to academic achievement. For example, Lowenstein, Friedman-Krauss, Raver, Jones, and Pess (2016) found "one way that poverty may have its negative impact on children's opportunities for learning is through low-income children's higher likelihood of enrollment in schools with more negative school climate" (p. 90). Nonetheless, Berkowitz et al. (2016) determined that there are no correlations between socioeconomic status and one's perception of a school climate. For instance, positive school climates are within Title I schools and non-Title I schools across a myriad of demographics and community types. Moreover,

Berkowitz et al. (2016) concluded Title I schools do not inherently possess a weak or negative school climate.

School Culture and Poverty

A considerable amount of literature is published on school culture and its relationship with academic achievement (Lewis, Asberry, DeJarnett, & King, 2016). School culture presents a dynamic platform to nurture or hinder reading proficiency in early childhood education (Shoaga, Akintola, & Okpor, 2017). School culture is characterized by the cultural norms established within a school alongside the interpersonal relationships between individuals within a school (Seifert & Vornberg, 2003). Ohlson, Swanson, Adams-Manning, and Byrd (2016) argued that “schools with toxic cultures with little stakeholder collaboration were more likely to produce poor academic achievement” (p. 116). Foremost, school culture hinges on the shared beliefs and shared actions within a school (McMaster, 2015).

Effective school characteristics can be established within high poverty schools to ensure a culture conducive to reading achievement and overall academic achievement (Suber, 2012). Edmonds (1979) revealed that “effective schools have a climate of expectations in which the personnel seek to be instructionally effective for all children and no child is allowed to fall below minimum achievement standards” (as cited in Suber, 2012, p. 4). This climate of expectations is what articulates and drives a school’s culture.

High-poverty schools (i.e., Title I schools) are tasked with supporting educational attainment amid poverty’s effects on teaching and learning. Naidoo and D'warte (2016) argued that teachers’ own culture shapes their instructional practices. Hence, schools must be careful to sustain a positive school culture that values the unique backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of all students. Positive school culture is increasingly important for Title I schools which tend to be situated in culturally diverse communities (Scholes et al., 2017).

Detailed examination of poverty and school culture by Burney and Beilke (2008) showed that poverty limits children's access to resources to support foundational skills. Additionally, students within high-poverty schools may experience a shift in school culture as they transition from elementary to secondary schools (McKnight, 2015). McKnight (2015) revealed that some teachers negatively impact school culture through "inattentive, disengaged, aloof, dismissive, discouraging, or just cruel" dispositions and "pedagogically they often preferred "direct" methods of instruction rather than engaging the students in processes of inquiry and dialog" (p. 96).

Kozol (1991), Newberg (2006), and Ullucci and Howard (2015) argued that high-poverty schools fail to provide children with the necessary elementary education to prepare them for advanced secondary curricula and college and career readiness overall (as cited in Burney & Beilke, 2008). Burney and Beilke (2008) elaborate on culture, in general, with the following:

Cultural deficit models locate responsibility for achievement gaps between groups within individuals (i.e., "blame the victim"). Such models contend that the poor and ethnic minorities subscribe to values that are not the same as those of the middle or upper classes (p. 182).

Data from several studies have identified the critical causes of negative school cultures and persistent poverty, especially within Title I schools. Ludwig and Mayer (2006) argued that contemporary social policy within the United States is misguided in how it aims to change the culture of poor parents. The effect of poverty on children's academic achievement persists despite moving children to better neighborhoods, progressively reducing financial support via welfare programs, or proselytizing religious adherence (Jackson, Johnson, & Persico, 2014; Ludwig & Mayer, 2006).

Solutions to the problems of poverty and schools are far more complicated. According to Parker, Grenville, and Flessa (2011) and Valli, Stefanski, and Jacobson (2016), successful parent and community partnerships build trust, facilitate parents' support for teaching and learning, and establish school communities exemplifying positive school climate and culture. According to Olasehinde, Akanmode, Alaiyemola, and Babatunde (2015), schools can leverage their school culture to support a reading culture intentionally. Olasehinde et al. (2015) determined that a reading culture establishes reading achievement as a key to lifelong learning and success within and beyond the school.

Reading Achievement

According to White, Kim, Kingston, and Foster (2014), poverty impacts reading achievement. Morrissey and Vinopal (2017) suggested that parent involvement also impacts reading achievement. Nonetheless, children from socio-economically disadvantaged communities, including children with atypical phonology, can learn (Stoel-Gammon, 2015). Most importantly, poverty may be a barrier to reading achievement, but poverty does not preclude students from exemplifying proficiency in reading. Sparks, Patton, and Murdoch (2014) argued that children be given a "fast" start in reading to ensure students continuously acquire and demonstrate age-appropriate literacy skills.

Reading achievement is illustrated by a student's level of proficiency, or comprehension, in reading print or digital material (Denton et al., 2015). Moreover, reading comprehension refers to the degree to which a reader understands what they read – the words and the sentences that collectively form meanings (Cummins, 2011; Linkersdörfer et al., 2014). Overall, a score is produced after assessing reading comprehension via a qualitative or quantitative metric. Hence, reading scores can be correlated with one's level of reading proficiency or reading achievement.

According to Bloom (1995), reading achievement provides a framework for academic achievement across the curriculum (as cited in Papatga & Ersoy, 2016).

Linkon (2016) argued that reading across disciplines supports reading achievement while improving specific content knowledge. Besides, reading achievement “depends on the effective use of reading comprehension strategies” (Bulut, 2017, p. 23). Reading comprehension strategies can be utilized to access narrative and expository texts related to any subject.

Comprehension strategies, linked to increased reading achievement, include the following self-regulated activities: defining a purpose for reading, analyzing text structure, or inferring figurative and connotative meanings within a text (Gurses & Adiguzel, 2013). Consequently, reading achievement is a result of the interdependent relationship between a person’s capacity to fluently read a book and comprehend a book with a degree of competence or skill (see Figure 1).

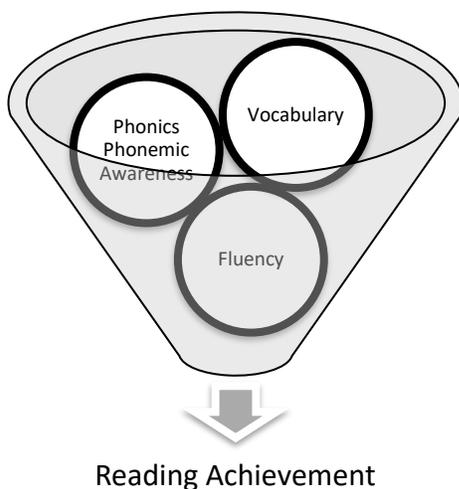


Figure 1. The systems relationship between the components of reading comprehension and reading achievement.

Parent Involvement and Reading Achievement. Parents play a crucial role in supporting a child's educational attainment. Notably, parents can significantly contribute to students' reading achievement score and overall success in school. McNeal (2014) determined that parent involvement is "any action taken by a parent that can theoretically be expected to improve student performance or behavior" (p. 564). Erdener (2016) reinforced this position by suggesting a positive correlation between parent involvement and academic achievement. Even still, different understandings persist relative to what parent involvement looks like and what it means to be involved in a child's education (Hilado, Kallemeyn, & Phillips, 2013). However, any level of positive parent input or influence favorably impacts students' performance in schools.

Foremost, children acquire fundamental literacy skills within their household (Bergen, Zuijen, Bishop, & Jong, 2017). Therefore, the relationship between a child and their parent provides a foundation for language acquisition and usage; reading is a task that is learned progressively over time. Wambiri and Ndani (2015) posited that children develop an ability to read through specific learning experiences within their household. The experience of early reading skill development requires support beyond that offered through a public school or early childhood education program. However, subsequent reading achievement can stifle, over time, for children from households with low socio-economic status (Wambiri & Ndani, 2015).

Williams and Sanchez (2013) and Bellibas and Gumus (2013) collectively concluded that low socioeconomic status was a barrier to parent involvement. Alternatively, Baird (2015) argued that traditional approaches to parent engagement and typical observations of parent involvement (e.g., attending parent-teacher conferences or helping with homework) insufficiently engage or involve all parents. Furthermore, traditional approaches to parent

involvement fail to adequately consider how cultural and linguistic backgrounds impact parent involvement (Baird, 2015). For example, a parent working two minimum wage jobs may not necessarily be able to attend school events during or outside of the typical instructional day. Nonetheless, a parent may equally provide support within the home environment which scaffolds their child's educational attainment. Hence, Poza, Brooks, and Valdés (2014) argued that diverse parent populations are often mischaracterized as uninvolved.

Bergen et al. (2017) and Puglisi, Hulme, Hamilton, and Snowling (2017) demonstrated that parents have a multitude of ways in which they can effectively contribute to their child's reading achievement. Traditional metrics that evaluate parent involvement may implicitly marginalize the work of diverse parent populations to impact teaching and learning positively. Chavkin and Williams (1989) and Woessmann's (2015) interpretation overlooks much of the distinct behaviors parents exemplify through self-generated literacy practices.

Parent involvement, regardless of socio-economic status, positively impact reading achievement (Dumont, Trautwein, Nagy, & Nagengast, 2014; Garbacz, McDowall, Schaughency, Sheridan, & Welch, 2015; Shaver & Walls, 1998). Schools can support parent involvement by providing multiple opportunities and various modalities in which parents can successfully, effectively contribute to their child's learning.

Additionally, schools should encourage and support informal and formal literacy experiences established within a student's home. Sénéchal (2006) stated that parent involvement significantly improves reading achievement through the following actions: "parents can promote their young child's vocabulary when they read books to their child" and "parents can tutor their child to learn the alphabet, read, and print words" (p. 61). Comparatively, students' achievement scores also impact parents' level of involvement (Dumont et al., 2014).

Reading Instruction

The history of literacy, public education, and social institutions within the United States are significant contributing factors in the development of reading instruction. However, national educational mandates and initiatives (e.g., No Child Left Behind and Common Core State Standards) constitute a policy cascade which has tremendously influenced classroom instruction (Papola-Ellis, 2014). Edmonson (2004) and Pasco (2003) determined that several aspects of literacy instruction are historically affected by local, state, and federal policy and reforms. This reality has resulted in teachers feeling less autonomous relative to their pedagogy and instructional decisions (Papola-Ellis, 2014).

When No Child Left Behind (NCLB) became law, states applied for the Reading First initiative. The Reading First Initiative “was a Grade K–3 grant-based initiative aimed at helping states and school systems reach NCLB reading targets” (Brighton, Moon, & Huang, 2015, p. 258). The Reading First initiative established a precedent regarding literacy achievement that reformed school districts’ reading and writing curriculums. Resultantly, these curriculum changes meant that reading instruction had to align to best-practices, also known as scientific-based research (Mohammed, Walker, Conderman, & Pasapia, 2016).

Guthrie and Klada (2014) suggested that reading instruction which infused and supported student choices, collaboration, scaffolding, and engagement improved students’ reading comprehension and motivation. However, many children will still face some difficulty in learning to read during their early language and literacy development (Carla et al., 2015). Kaiser and Hemmeter (2014) argued that effective, developmentally-appropriate instruction “for vocabulary, comprehension, phonological awareness, and other early reading skills during the preschool years is essential” (p. 243). Within the instructional context of preschool and primary

education, teachers typically possess a limited understanding of how other educational professionals (e.g., Speech-Language Pathologist) can support their facilitation of developmentally-appropriate literacy and language skills (Wilson, McNeill, & Gillon, 2015).

Moreover, primary school years are also times in which children are exposed to reading instruction within various instructional contexts (e.g., large-group/whole-group versus small-group/guided reading instruction). After examining the content of teachers' early literacy instruction, Zhand, Diamond, and Powell (2015) discovered the following: teachers provided explicit vocabulary instruction while reading aloud a book, compared to modeling code-related strategies, and teachers utilized large-group/whole-group instruction to engage in non-book reading activities to explore literacy knowledge. Additionally, Berkeley, Regan, Dimitrov, Guckert, and Ray (2016) indicated that preservice and in-service teachers lack the professional and pedagogical knowledge to teach struggling readers effectively.

Whole-group reading instruction. McLaughlin and Allen (2002) stated that whole-group reading instruction is a form of teacher-led instruction where the teacher provides direct instruction, to the entire class, focusing on the explicit modeling of reading comprehension strategies. Baker et al. (2016) posited that reading instruction in small groups reduces reading failures and reading disabilities. However, the use of whole-group reading instruction has had a long-standing history of implementation within classrooms.

Typically, teachers deliver instruction from a teacher-centered or teacher-led approach (Duru, 2015). This approach to teaching places the differentiated needs of individual learners behind the need to provide direct instruction. Effective delivery of instruction is crucial amidst limited resources, time, or professional pedagogical knowledge. Whole-group instruction is the basis for various pedagogies across the curriculum (Dole, Bloom, & Kowalske, 2016).

Lin, Justice, Emery, Mashburn, and Pentimonti (2017) argued that whole-group instruction provides an instructional context that deepens social depth and student engagement. In other words, whole-group instruction increased the frequency at which students could regularly interact with each other (Lin et al., 2017). In contrast, Hollo and Hirn (2015) insisted that “opportunities to respond and active engagement were significantly higher during small-group lessons” (p. 30). The implications of these findings suggest that small-group instruction may be more appropriate for students usually disengaged by traditional approaches to reading instruction. Similarly, DiCarlo, Pierce, Baumgartner, Harris, and Ota (2012) reported that whole-group instruction demonstrated a negative relationship between children's attentiveness and the length of the instructional activity. For students within Title 1 schools, the impact of poverty is compounded by instructional practices that fail to offer differentiated instruction.

Among the components of reading instruction, Swanson et al. (2012) determined that instruction related to reading comprehension is often observed. Likewise, Walker and Stevens (2017) suggested that the whole-group instructional context was the most commonly utilized grouping structure for reading instruction. This revelation could be linked to the relative ease of whole-group grouping compared to small-group instruction based on ability and areas of deficit. Whole-group reading instruction has been successfully implemented within inclusive classrooms serving students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). Baker, Burns, Kame'enui, Smolkowski, and Baker (2016) conceded that students shouldn't be excluded from “small-group instruction that targets their specific reading difficulties as identified by formative assessment” (p. 237).

Round-robin reading. In discussions of whole-group reading instruction, one controversial issue has been round-robin reading (RRR). During this practice, individuals are

called upon, by the teacher, to read parts of the selected text. As a student reads aloud, the teacher monitors the whole-group and, without notice, calls on another student to continue reading the book aloud (Jones, 2013). On the one hand, Fair and Combs (2011) argue that RRR is an ineffective strategy that hinders the development of independent reading skills. On the other hand, Standal and Towner (1982) contended that RRR exposed students to real-world phenomena such as boredom, inferencing, and one-upmanship.

Ash, Kuhn, and Walpole (2009) deplore the tendency of many teachers to continue use of RRR in the classroom. Most significantly, the research revealing the ineffectiveness of RRR is insufficient to improve instructional practices alone (Ash et al., 2009). Teachers must be taught effective literacy pedagogies for the 21st-century learner. Pre-service teacher training is especially important in schools that lack opportunities for professional learning. Ash et al. (2009) believed that teachers must be trained to use research-based practices linked to improved student learning outcomes. Notably, Jones (2013) called RRR a “mundane discursive practice” (p. 528). Thus, RRR as pedagogy interferes with the natural reading process; it may alienate struggling readers and produce poor habits that inhibit reading fluency and comprehension (Fair & Combs, 2011).

Choral reading. In response to the deficits of the round robin reading discourse, choral reading addresses independent reading skills in a collaborative environment. Given the decreased emphasis on word recognition skills as students move towards intermediate and middle grades, choral reading offers teacher-led oral reading experiences (Toste, Williams, & Capin, 2017). Choral reading is a whole-group reading activity that allows students to participate in fluency development collectively. Uniquely, aspects of choral reading are facilitated in various instructional context (e.g., whole-group or small group). Choral reading is commonplace

amongst primary teachers that may be introducing poetry and rhymes (Ransinki, Rupley, Pagie, & Nichols, 2016). While many teachers may find this technique valuable with literary texts, Brewer (2016) demonstrated that choral reading could be implemented efficiently to navigate nonfiction texts. Nonfiction texts offer students access to information and disciplinary content. Struggling readers may be discouraged by their lack of word recognition and fluency. However, the benefits of choral reading are reflected through increased reading fluency. Paige and Magpuri-Lavell (2014) emphasized the role reading fluency plays in literacy achievement. Likewise, choral reading is a critical aspect of whole-group fluency instruction that addresses the needs of struggling readers (Ransinki et al., 2017).

Guided reading instruction. “Learning gaps emerge early, particularly among disadvantaged students” (Dougherty, 2014, p. 15). For students within Title 1 schools, resources are allocated to address the effects of poverty on academic performance (e.g., reading achievement score). These social and cultural influences on reading, for students from low-income communities, are tremendous. Reading achievement within early childhood predicts reading and social behavior later in life (Guo, Sun, Breit-Smith, Morrison, & Connor, 2015). Guided reading instruction may face difficulties with teacher interpretation and implementation (Hanke, 2014). Despite this, the sociocultural theory allows teachers to connect multiple literacies, those used within the school and within the household, to address reading struggles (Degener & Berne, 2014). Connecting multiple literacies, building upon prior knowledge, and exploring students’ interests keenly adapts instructional activities through guided reading instruction. Young (2017) contended that literacy serves as a social and academic tool that can transform children’s academic performance when taught in a context that sparks their interests.

The arrival of guided reading instruction as reading instruction is linked to teaching practices in various instructional contexts. In fact, guided reading borrowed many of the pedagogical principles of the traditional basal approach to reading instruction – making this strategy new, but not entirely revolutionary. Ford and Opitz (2011) revealed that many basal readers and textbooks established guided reading lessons within their instructional material. Harris and Hodge (1995) developed a definition of guided reading which connected teachers’ structure, direction, and scaffolding to students’ comprehension of written texts. Betts (1946) integrated guided reading instruction as a directed reading activity. However, Gray and Reese (1957) initially introduced the term ‘guided reading’ while explicitly defining how teachers should give students a purpose for reading, build self-reliance in their literacy skills, and scaffold students through text-dependent questions (Ford & Opitz, 2011). After all, practices within reading instruction had never truly meant that students’ first exposure to reading material was an unstructured, independent experience.

While traditional approaches to reading instruction divide literacy development into reading skills and whole language, guided reading instruction is inclusive of a balanced literacy program (Cassidy & Ortlieb, 2013). Most significantly, Reutzel and Cooter (2000) argued for the integration of high-interest reading materials leveled for the ability of the reader. This aspect of guided reading instruction is crucial, as guided reading deemphasizes explicit instruction so that students can read and learn from texts (Denton, Fletcher, Taylor, Barth, & Vaughn, 2014). According to Lipp and Helfrich (2016), guided reading instruction should “allow students to warm up by reading a familiar text at the beginning of the lesson” (p. 641). Nonetheless, there is a significant difference between using aspects of the guided reading lesson, as a directed activity,

and using guided reading instruction to improve readers' comprehension and level of reading achievement (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Guided reading instruction affords students differentiation, remediation, and enrichment within the reading classroom. After selecting meaningful texts, of interest and ability level for students, teachers model and deliver reading strategies and processing controls relevant to the text (Gaffner, Johnson, Torres-Elias, & Dryden, 2014). Instruction takes place within the context of small groups. Unlike, traditional 'round-robin' reading strategies, small-groups used for guided reading instruction do not take turns individually reading. Similarly, these groups may change as students separately acquire decoding strategies, fluency, self-monitoring, or comprehension (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

As an interactive learning process, guided reading promotes student reasoning and communication skills; instruction connects students' prior knowledge of the text or content for the construction of meaning (Yazdani & Mohammadi, 2015). Students who construct meaning from the text are then able to become proficient readers. Guided reading offers the scaffolding and relevant reading material to engage students in active learning. Most importantly, guided reading instruction has been shown to effectively improve literacy and language skills while positively impacting students' attitude towards reading (Oostdam, Blok, & Boendermaker, 2015).

Reading Comprehension

Reading is more than the limited ability to call or pronounce words. Reading indeed involves an adequate level of understanding or comprehension of information. "Reading is the skill that enables one to transform the visual graphic information into meaningful units of thought" (Mahapatra, 2016, p. 145). To read, then, means to comprehend what one has read.

Bulut (2017) argued that reading comprehension is “a complex process including reader’s knowledge of vocabulary, the interaction with the text and their use of comprehension strategies” (p. 23). Vellutino defined reading comprehension as the ability to obtain meaning from a written text (2003).

The complicated process incumbent within reading comprehension involves an interaction with the text and prior knowledge. Foremost, people draw inferences from the text, sentence structure, and word usage to reach conclusions about the meaning of what they read. Warner, Fay, and Spörer (2017) contended that reading comprehension is primarily a self-regulated activity which hinges upon the proactive effort of the reader. People obtain meaning from a written text after possessing the prerequisite skill to decode words. This skillset requires metacognitive strategies which allow for monitoring and extraction of meaning from a written text (Botsas, 2017; Cain, 2009).

Reading comprehension should be prioritized as an essential skill taught during the first years of elementary school (Papatga & Ersoy, 2016). Reading comprehension is utilized within academic and non-academic contexts to understand the world. For young children, the acquisition of reading comprehension skills catalyzes their language development and processing for success in various academic subjects. Students’ ability to comprehend what they read transfers directly into academic achievement in mathematics, science, and social studies (Akbasli, Sahin, & Yaykiran, 2016). Furthermore, children in the 21st century are expected to read a variety of literary and informational texts across the curriculum. The heightened expectation and integration of literacy could translate to a stronger emphasis on academic, content-specific vocabulary within multiple disciplines.

Nonetheless, difficulty with reading and reading comprehension stem from an inability to decode the words in a written text or failure to understand or process the words they have decoded (Mahapatra, 2016). This struggle may manifest through mere deficiency, needing intervention and remediation, or as a reading disability, requiring accommodation and differentiated instructional support. Mahapatra (2016) concluded that a person's reading struggles have significant implications and are marked by social or emotional maladjustment, school dropout, or delinquent behavior. The significance of reading, within academic and non-academic contexts, substantiates scaffolding and attention to detail as people strengthen their reading comprehension; the complicated process of learning to read begins before elementary school.

Early Literacy Development. Tiernan and Kerins (2014) defined early literacy skills as skills involving oral language, alphabet knowledge, phonics, and perceptual skills. These skills are “crucial in the development of children and children who learn to read early reap the benefits when they start school” (Hairston, 2011, p. 27). Indeed, parents possess the position of influence and proximity to scaffold early literacy development within their homes.

Goldstein et al. (2017) determined that children who entered kindergarten without phonological awareness or alphabet knowledge are at severe risk for becoming struggling readers. In response, some libraries and government agencies have attempted to distribute books so that children have access to print literature. Nonetheless, Neuman (2017) concluded that such practices should be revamped to substantively enhance children's exposure to books during their early years.

The advent of technological improvements and internet-based applications may establish some relief. Early literacy development is strengthened through instructional technology, such as

an iPad or computer tablet, that offers interventions to learn phonemes (Chai, Vail, & Ayres, 2014). Additionally, early musical training has been shown to positively impact children's phonological awareness (Kempton et al., 2016). These indicators of early literacy development coincide with skills such as letter-naming and letter-writing fluency which successfully strengthens reading comprehension (Reutzel, Mohr, & Jones, 2017).

Moreover, early readers can be taught sight words; sight words are high-frequency words found within literature and language appropriate for beginning and developing readers. However, sight word instruction is typically a supplement to phonics instruction because sight words usually lack phonemic spelling and cannot be sounded out. This different approach may have primary challenges as early readers learn that all words are not pronounced as they are written. Additionally, Dittlinger and Lerman (2011) discovered that emerging readers acquired sight word fluency when sight words are revealed to them, in print, and vocalized by the teacher. Hayes (2017) found that visual supports can help students as they navigate sight words.

According to Kroll, McLaughlin, Neyman, Johnson, and Beiers (2013) sight word instruction is most effective when facilitated through the following methods:

Direct Instruction (DI) flashcards can be used during reading instruction to teach a child sight words. Each flashcard has one target word printed on the front. The student is presented each flashcard with the prompt, "What word?" The student then has the opportunity to identify the word. If the student identifies the word correctly, the flashcard is placed in the back of the deck. If the student makes an error by incorrectly identifying the word, the teacher uses the correction procedure of model-test with the student, saying, "This word is _____. What word?" The student is given the opportunity to accurately identify the word. Once the word has been correctly identified, the flashcard is placed one

or two flashcards back, so it will appear again quickly for the student, and so the student has an opportunity to identify the word soon after the correction procedure has taken place. A set of flashcards should begin with about three or four words that the student already knows, and two or three words that the student does not know (p. 14).

Conclusively, early literacy development requires very intentional direct instruction, scaffolding, and modeling of early literacy skills. Emerging readers have an extensive opportunity to establish foundational reading skills from infancy to and through early childhood. Whether early literacy development flourishes via phonics instruction, sight word instruction, or a balanced literacy approach, children should have ample time to see, hear, vocalize, write, and continuously practice the English language. During early literacy development, children learn to recognize orthographic stimuli and connect such stimuli to phonics and logic related to word meaning (Eberhard-Moscicka, Jost, Raith, & Maurer, 2015). For example, a lack of word recognition can significantly stifle reading fluency and comprehension (Erwin, 2016).

Reading Comprehension and Struggling Readers. Most people can recall a time when they struggled to understand written text. This recollection may find them reminiscing about a class, or a moment in a library, or an instance where they had to decipher digital communication. Nonetheless, challenges with reading comprehension are a natural part of the reading comprehension process; this is especially the case as readers move outside of their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

The National Research Council (2012) claimed that little is known about reading difficulties for adolescents and young adults (as cited in Mellard, Woods, Desa, & Vuyk, 2015). However, Pittman and Honchell (2014) indicated that literature discussion and text-to-self connections increased student enjoyment among struggling middle school readers. Melekoglu

and Wilkerson (2013) argued that struggling readers, especially within elementary schools, demonstrate a negative attitude towards the task of reading and lower levels of motivation to read. While research may illustrate these findings, effective teachers move beyond student motivation to ensure that each student consistently accesses texts which align with their interests (relevance) and learning targets (rigor).

Moreover, reading comprehension can be improved alongside efforts to enhance reading fluency. Therefore, effective reading instruction should provide modeling, scaffolding, and opportunities to practice reading for understanding, instead of reading for pace and expression (Kuhn, Rasinski, & Zimmerman, 2014). Additionally, opportunities to read “rhyming poetry and other texts beyond the narrative and informational texts that have been traditionally used for reading instruction” improve reading fluency and comprehension (Rasinski, Rupley, Pagie, & Nichols, 2016, p. 163).

According to Rasinski (2012), reading practice through repeated oral readings, teacher modeling, and scaffolding are required to observe measurable improvements in students’ reading fluency and comprehension. Poor phonological awareness tremendously hinder reading ability and reading comprehension (Saygin et al., 2013). Deficiencies in reading comprehension, and thereby lagging reading achievement, are a product of failing to recognize words (i.e., word-level processing) and failing to infer word meanings (Aboud, Bailey, Petrill, & Cutting, 2016).

Summary

Literacy skills, especially reading comprehension, are a crucial component of academic achievement in all content areas. Defenders of whole-group reading instruction cannot have it both ways. Hollo and Hirn (2015) acknowledged that small group instruction (e.g., guided reading) best aligned with assessment uses to provide effective reading instruction. While

national standards and local curriculums balance the aims of public education, increasing school accountability affords an influx of challenges for Title I schools. Braced by the tenets of sociocultural and cooperative learning theories, teachers can effectively facilitate reading instruction that improves student learning outcomes (e.g., reading achievement score). For instance, Zenkov et al. (2013) argued that culturally relevant literacy practices help students achieve in school. In fact, connecting multiple literacies, building upon prior knowledge, and exploring students' interests adapts instruction to meet the needs of socio-economically disadvantaged students.

Young (2017) contended that literacy serves as a social and academic tool that can transform children's academic performance when taught in a context that sparks their interests. Although traditional approaches to reading instruction divide literacy development into reading skills and whole language, guided reading instruction is inclusive of a balanced literacy program (Cassidy & Ortlieb, 2013). Wilson et al. (2015) remind us that a balanced literacy program offers an appropriate instructional context to deliver and reinforce developmentally-appropriate literacy and language skills. Conclusively, effective reading instruction meets the needs of individual readers, regardless of cultural or linguistic background (Genesee et al., 2006). A longstanding connection between schools and communities provides a catalyst for literacy practices which improve reading achievement and overall academic achievement (Curry et al., 2016).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The causal-comparative study purported to test the sociocultural theory of human learning that compared the instructional context of reading instruction to reading achievement for third-grade students. Chapter 3 provides the research design, research question, null hypothesis, participants, and setting. Instrumentation, research procedures, and data analysis are included.

Design

The study utilized a quantitative causal-comparative research design to determine the effect of the context of reading instruction on third-grade students' reading achievement scores. The causal-comparative (non-experimental) research design was chosen primarily because the study analyzed archived data. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), the causal-comparative design compares pre-existing, intact groups of participants who have preexisting differences between the groups. Causal-comparative research designs allow the researcher to examine a purported cause-and-effect relationship after the fact. Within the study, the independent variable (context of reading instruction) cannot be manipulated because the intervention was previously executed during the 2017-2018 school year.

The independent variable was defined as reading instruction and had two levels: guided reading instruction or whole-group reading instruction. Reading instruction is the act of teaching vocabulary and comprehension alongside phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency (Berkeley, Regan, Dimitrov, Guckert, & Ray, 2016). Guided reading instruction is an instructional strategy in which students receive small group reading instruction amongst peers with similar levels of reading proficiency (Delacruz, 2014; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Whole-group reading instruction

is an instructional strategy in which all students in a class collectively receive the same direct instruction (Baker et al., 2016).

The dependent variable was defined as post-test reading achievement score, and the control variable of the pre-test reading achievement score was controlled in this study. Dorsey (2015) described reading achievement scores as quantitative values (i.e., natural numbers) which represent a student's level of proficient performance in reading. For this study, the Renaissance Star 360® reading assessment (STAR) was used as the instrument. STAR automatically calculates a mean scale score which permits comparison of performance across grade levels. Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2016b) stated: "a scaled score is calculated based on the difficulty of questions and the number of correct responses" (p. 2). The researcher used Fall 2017 STAR scores as the pre-test reading achievement score and Spring 2018 STAR scores as the post-test reading achievement score.

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the reading achievement scores of third-grade students who participate in guided reading instruction and third-grade students who participate in whole-group reading instruction while controlling for pre-test reading achievement scores?

Null Hypothesis

H₀1: There is no statistically significant difference between the reading achievement scores of third-grade students who participate in guided reading instruction and third-grade students who participate in whole-group reading instruction while controlling for pre-test reading achievement scores.

Participants and Setting

The sample size for the study was $N=340$. Participants were selected based on a convenience sampling of Title I elementary schools ($n=4$) within an urban school district in the Southeastern region of the United States. The researcher selected the study site based on convenience sampling because the sample was convenient and suited the purpose of the study (Gall et al., 2007). The researcher used a sample size greater than 50 to draw inferences that would be valid and reliable (Gall et al., 2007). The sample size ($N=340$) in this study was sufficient to observe a medium to large effect (Warner, 2013). The statistical power of this study was 0.7. The alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance (Warner, 2013).

The convenience sampling of participants consisted of 340 third-grade students aged 8 to 9 years old. According to Gall et al. (2007), naturally occurring groups are groups of participants that exist by nature and are not randomly assigned or otherwise manipulated by the researcher. In this study, the researcher divided participants into two naturally occurring groups based on two levels of the independent variable, guided reading instruction (Group 1) or whole-group reading instruction (Group 2). As shown in Table 2, 49% of all participants were male, and 51% of all participants were female.

Table 2

Gender identity for the sample

Independent Variable and Grouping	<i>N</i>	Percent Male	Percent Female
Guided Reading Instruction (Group 1)	184	49.45	50.54
Whole-Group Reading Instruction (Group 2)	156	48.72	51.28
Total	340	49	51

Table 3 displays the racial/ethnic identity of all participants by study site. Of this sample, the reported racial/ethnic identity included 74% Black, 11% White, 10% Hispanic, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 4% Multi-Racial participants.

Table 3

Racial/ethnic identity for the sample at each study site

Independent Variable by Study Site	Percent Black	Percent White	Percent Hispanic	Percent Asian/Pacific Islander	Percent Multi-Racial
Guided Reading Instruction					
School A	97.94	2.06	0	0	0
School B	94.40	3.45	1.15	0	0
Whole-Group Reading Instruction					
School C	25.86	39.66	24.14	3.45	6.9
School D	61.22	10.20	20.41	0	8.16

The researcher chose third-grade students for two reasons. Third-grade students typically have reached a developmental milestone where they have transitioned from learning to read towards reading to learn. Additionally, pedagogical interventions mitigate the significance of their stage of reading development (Catts, Herrera, Nielsen, & Bridges, 2015; Reutzel, Petscher, & Spichtig, 2015; Wolff, 2016).

Participants had an archived pre-test and post-test scale score from the Renaissance Star 360® reading assessment (STAR) during the 2017-2018 school year. The reading achievement scores from the Fall 2017 administration of the STAR served as the pre-test score. The reading achievement score from the Spring 2018 administration of the STAR served as the post-test score. This aspect of the study afforded the researcher an opportunity to strengthen the internal validity of the study. Gall et al. (2007) stated that internal validity could be supported by analyzing differences between groups while controlling for prior knowledge (e.g., pre-test reading achievement score).

Participant and site names remained anonymous. The convenience sampling of Title I elementary schools ($n=4$) correlated with a pseudonym label. The researcher labeled schools as School A, School B, School C, and School D (pseudonyms). The researcher previously determined which schools offered which type of reading instruction via personal communication with a school administrator during the 2017-2018 school year (J. Doe, personal communication, May 21, 2018). Consequently, School A and School B implemented the independent variable of guided reading instruction during the 2017-2018 school year. School C and School D implemented the independent variable of whole-group reading instruction during the 2017-2018 school year.

School A, School B, School C, and School D were public elementary schools within Independent School District (pseudonym). Each school served an ethnically diverse community in which most residents were minorities (e.g., African-American, Asian, or Hispanic). The setting was urban and characterized by high population density with access to major roads and expressways, public transportation, public libraries, public safety, and a consolidated municipal government. The setting had a per capita income of \$17,010 with 24.1% of families and 30.6% of the population living below the poverty line.

Demographic information (e.g., enrollment, gender identity, racial/ethnic identity, and socioeconomic status) for the study population is represented in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4

Student enrollment and gender identity for the overall population at each study site

Independent Variable by Study Site	Overall Student Enrollment	Percent Male	Percent Female
Guided Reading Instruction			
School A	554	43	57
School B	719	50	50
Whole-Group Reading Instruction			
School C	417	48	52
School D	876	51	49
Total	2,566		

Table 5

Racial/ethnic identity for the overall population at each study site

Independent Variable by Study Site	Percent Black	Percent White	Percent Hispanic	Percent Asian/Pacific Islander	Percent Multi-Racial
Guided Reading Instruction					
School A	96.75	0.72	1.26	0.19	1.08
School B	96	2	1	0	1
Whole-Group Reading Instruction					
School C	25	39	30	2	5
School D	76	8	14	0	2

Independent School District (pseudonym) was a large metropolitan school district within the Southeastern region of the United States. Independent School District (ISD) had a total enrollment of 24,007 students during the 2017-2018 school year. The racial/ethnic identity of students enrolled in ISD was as follows: 72% African-American, 19% White, 5% Hispanic, 2% Multiracial, and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. 10% of students enrolled in ISD were classified as Students with Disabilities (SWD), and 2% were classified as English Language Learners (ELL).

100% of the students within ISD were eligible for free school meals during the 2017-2018 school year due to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees the national school lunch program and administers the CEP for schools within the United States. According to the USDA (2017), “CEP allows the nation’s highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications” (p. 1).

ISD was selected because the researcher desired to include a convenience sampling of Title I schools that had already implemented the independent variable (context of reading instruction). Each study site served elementary students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Two of the study sites previously implemented guided reading instruction and two study sites previously implemented whole-group reading instruction during the 2017-2018 school year. Thus, the independent variable could not be manipulated because the intervention was previously executed; this instance represented a naturally occurring variation in the independent and dependent variable (Gall et al., 2007).

Instrumentation

The researcher used the Renaissance Star 360® reading assessment (STAR) as the instrument in the study. STAR is a norm-referenced assessment. The purpose of this instrument is to measure reading achievement level. STAR is administered via a computer and requires a participant to complete selected-response questions. The instrument provides a valid and reliable estimate of students' reading achievement level, assesses reading achievement based on standards-based criteria and national norms, and offers progress monitoring to longitudinally measure growth in participants' reading achievement (Renaissance Learning, Inc., 2013).

ISD administered STAR three times during the 2017-2018 school year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) to measure growth in students' reading achievement. STAR Reading was created in the 1990s to provide a valid and reliable norm-referenced assessment for educators. Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2014) sought to establish a computer-based reading assessment which incorporated ease of assessment administration and efficiency in reporting assessment results. Initial instrument utilization proved to be useful for Response to Intervention (RTI) screening and progress monitoring (Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2016a). Moreover, the instrument is used

in numerous studies (e.g., DiPerna, Lei, Cheng, Hart, & Bellinger, 2018; Levitt, List, Neckermann, & Sadoff, 2016; Nunnery, Ross, & McDonald, 2006).

STAR is a computer-adaptive test (CAT). Assessment items within the instrument and CATs, in general, are based on the student's previous performance on an assessment item. STAR continuously adjusts the difficulty of each item. For example, a correct answer selection would cause the next assessment item to be more difficult. According to Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2013), if the student answers incorrectly, the next question will be less difficult. McBride and Martin (1983) stated that a CAT is more efficient than conventional tests because the CAT provides differentiated assessment items which respond to the participant's ability.

STAR is a CAT with selected-responses that ensure efficient use of testing time and computerized scoring (Nicol, 2007; Stiggins, 2005). Haladyna and Downing (1989) suggested that the selected-response format also supports content validity. STAR is a reliable instrument as evidenced by generic reliability coefficients and test-retest correlation coefficients. Previous performance on STAR suggested internal consistency with a reliability coefficient of 0.97 and retest reliability with a reliability coefficient of 0.90 (Renaissance Learning, Inc., 2013).

The validity of STAR is supported by substantial correlations with other valid measures of reading comprehension and reading achievement in grades three through 12; average correlation ranges from 0.60 to 0.87 (Renaissance Learning, Inc., 2013). Construct validity is a crucial element of a valid and reliable instrument. According to the *STAR Reading™ Technical Manual* developed by Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2016a), "the STAR Reading 2.x and higher tests claim to provide an estimate of a child's reading achievement level" (p. 41). The STAR Reading assessment has been linked to the Degrees of Reading Power comprehension assessment with a correlation of 0.89. Hence, Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2016a) concluded "the

constructs (i.e., reading comprehension) measured by STAR Reading and Degrees of Reading Power are almost indistinguishable” (p. 41).

Furthermore, STAR administers thirty-four items per testing event (Renaissance Learning, Inc., 2016a). The instrument is administered online via a desktop computer, laptop computer, or a tablet device. STAR is a CAT that does not have a time-limit. Students complete the assessment at their own pace. Typically, students can expect to complete the assessment within 30 minutes (Renaissance Learning, Inc., 2016a).

Based on performance on all instrument items, STAR automatically generates a scaled score (SS) that ranges from 0 to 1,400. Per *Renaissance Star 360® reading assessment ®: Score Definitions* (2016), norm-referenced scores are derived from the SS. In a linking study that correlated SSs for two versions of the STAR, Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2013) determined that third-grade students demonstrated a mean SS of 419 with a standard deviation of 128.

Procedures

To proceed with the study, the researcher submitted an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application to Liberty University for approval (see Appendix A). Concurrently, the researcher requested and received authorization to conduct the study in ISD (see Appendix B). After securing IRB exemption and approval from ISD, data collection and analysis commenced. The study strictly used anonymous archived data, so participant consent or assent was not required. The researcher conveniently sampled two Title I elementary schools that previously implemented guided reading instruction and two Title I elementary schools that previously implemented whole-group reading instruction during the 2017-2018 school year.

The researcher collected archived STAR pre-test and post-test reading achievement scores for all participants ($N=340$) within ISD. School names were redacted and replaced with a

pseudonym (e.g., School A, School B, etc.) and the context of reading instruction implemented (e.g., guided reading instruction or whole-group reading instruction).

ISD provided raw data stripped of personally identifiable information. Moreover, the study only included third-grade students at the sampled study sites within ISD. The researcher divided participants into two naturally occurring groups based on two levels of the independent variable, guided reading instruction (Group 1) or whole-group reading instruction (Group 2). The researcher labeled each participant numerically (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) alongside their school name (e.g., School A, School B, etc.). Each participants' gender, racial/ethnic identity, socioeconomic status (i.e., eligibility for free/reduced-price school lunch), and pre-test SS and post-test SS for the STAR were listed. The researcher saved the raw data in an electronic spreadsheet document. After collecting the data, the spreadsheet was encrypted thereby requiring a password to access the electronic file.

The data was analyzed in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to produce descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The researcher conducted data screening and assumption testing before performing an ANCOVA using SPSS. Following data analysis, findings were reported for the null hypothesis. Findings were saved in an electronic text file. The electronic spreadsheet document (data) and electronic text file (findings) were saved on a USB flash drive and stored in a locked file cabinet. The researcher was the only person to access the data. The researcher intended for all data and findings to be kept for at least three years as required by federal regulations. The data will be destroyed after the three-year retention period.

Data Analysis

SPSS was used for all statistical analyses. The study utilized an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test reading achievement score of Group 1 (Guided Reading Instruction) and Group 2 (Whole-Group Reading Instruction) while controlling for pre-test reading achievement score. An ANCOVA is a parametric statistical test which evaluates differences between means of a dependent variable (Gall et al., 2007). ANCOVA also statistically controls for the effects of a covariate. Gall et al. (2007) revealed that a covariate could predict outcomes within a study. Hence, participants' pre-test reading achievement score was included and defined as the covariate to improve the ability to find a statistically significant difference between groups by reducing within-group error variance (Gall et al., 2007; Green & Salkind, 2013; Warner, 2013).

Initial data screening was executed by manually sorting the data to identify unusual STAR scores (e.g., outside the SS range of 0 to 1,400). The researcher ran a Box-and-Whisker plot to assess for outliers within the data (Green & Salkind, 2013). Each SS represented an independent observation as an interval measurement. Tests for normality were conducted by running a Kolmogorov–Smirnov (KS) test and producing frequency histograms with a normal distribution overlay. The KS was most appropriate for the sample size ($N=340$) in this study. KS is required for samples greater than 50 (Warner, 2013). The KS test and frequency histograms illustrated a normal distribution of the data.

The researcher tested for assumptions of linearity using scatter plots between the pre-test variable and post-test variable for each group (Warner, 2013). To determine the assumption of linearity and assumption of bivariate normal distribution, the researcher used scatter plots to look for the classic cigar shape (Warner, 2013). The researcher looked for no significant interaction

within the scatter plots to ensure the assumption of homogeneity-of-slope. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variance was conducted to test for assumptions of equal variances (Warner, 2013).

The SS for all participants were analyzed using an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for the null hypothesis. The sample size ($N=340$) in this study was sufficient to observe a medium to large effect (Gall et al., 2007). The alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance. The statistical power of this study was 0.7 (Warner, 2013). Descriptive statistics (e.g., Means and standard deviations) were calculated for the control variable and the dependent variable. The effect size was reported based on the eta squared statistic and interpreted considering Cohen's *d*. (Warner, 2013).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The study utilized a causal-comparative research design to determine the effect of the context of reading instruction on third-grade students' reading achievement scores. The independent variable was reading instruction and had two levels: guided reading instruction or whole-group reading instruction. The dependent variable was the post-test reading achievement score, and the control variable of the pre-test reading achievement score was controlled in this study.

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the reading achievement scores of third-grade students who participate in guided reading instruction and third-grade students who participate in whole-group reading instruction while controlling for pre-test reading achievement scores?

Null Hypothesis

H₀1: There is no statistically significant difference between the reading achievement scores of third-grade students who participate in guided reading instruction and third-grade students who participate in whole-group reading instruction while controlling for pre-test reading achievement scores.

Descriptive Statistics

The sample size for the study was $N=340$. Participants were selected based on a convenience sampling of Title I elementary schools ($n=4$) within an urban school district in the Southeastern region of the United States. The sample was convenient and suited the purpose of the study (Gall et al., 2007). The researcher used a sample size greater than 50 to draw inferences that would be valid and reliable (Gall et al., 2007). The sample size ($N=340$) in this study was sufficient to observe a medium to large effect (Warner, 2013). The statistical power of this study was 0.7. The alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance (Warner, 2013).

The sample consisted of 51% female and 49% male participants. Of this sample, the reported racial/ethnic identity included 74% Black, 11% White, 10% Hispanic, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 4% Multi-Racial participants. 100% of the participants were eligible for free school meals during the 2017-2018 school year due to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees the national school lunch program and administers the CEP for schools within the United States. According to the USDA (2017), “CEP allows the nation’s highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications” (p. 1).

In this study, the researcher divided participants into two naturally occurring groups based on two levels of the independent variable, guided reading instruction (Group 1) or whole-group reading instruction (Group 2). According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), naturally occurring groups are groups of participants that exist by nature and are not randomly assigned or otherwise manipulated by the researcher. For Group 1, the mean score increased from the pre-test ($M = 247.02$) to the post-test, showing that on average students scored 317.15 for their post-test reading score for guided reading instruction. For Group 2, the mean score increased from the

pre-test ($M = 237.38$) to the post-test, showing that on average students scored 289.18 for their post-test reading achievement score for whole-group reading instruction. The pre-test scores for all participants had a mean of $M = 242.60$ and the post-test scores for all participants had a mean of $M = 304.31$. The descriptive statistics for the pre-test and post-test reading achievement scores are displayed in Table 6 and Table 7 respectively.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Test Reading Achievement Scores for All Participants

			Std.
Group	Mean	<i>N</i>	Deviation
Group 1	247.02	184	31.855
Group 2	237.38	156	26.386
Total	242.60	340	29.820

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Post-Test Reading Achievement Scores for All Participants

			Std.
Group	Mean	<i>N</i>	Deviation
Group 1	317.15	184	30.955
Group 2	289.18	156	26.209
Total	304.31	340	32.033

Results

Data Screening

The dependent variable (post-test reading achievement scores) and covariate (pre-test reading achievement scores) of the two groups were assessed for inconsistencies within the data. The researcher performed initial data screening by examining the data to verify that each participant had one pre-test score and one post-test score. The researcher manually sorted the data to identify unusual reading achievement scores (e.g., outside the mean scale score range of 0 to 1,400). Each participant had a valid scale score for the pre-test and post-test.

The researcher utilized a Box-and-Whisker plot to identify outliers within the pre-test reading achievement scores (see Figure 2) and the post-test reading achievement scores (see Figure 3). Based on the Box-and-Whisker plot for the dependent variable and covariate, extreme outliers were not evident, and no inconsistencies were found within the collected data.

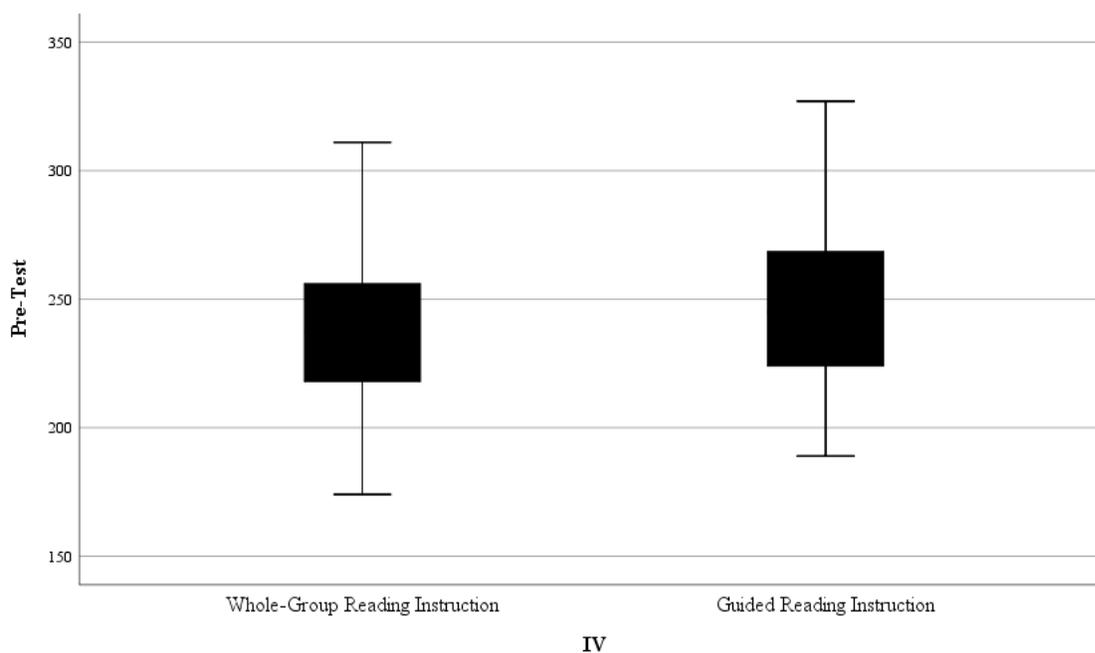


Figure 2. Box-and-Whisker plot for the control variable.

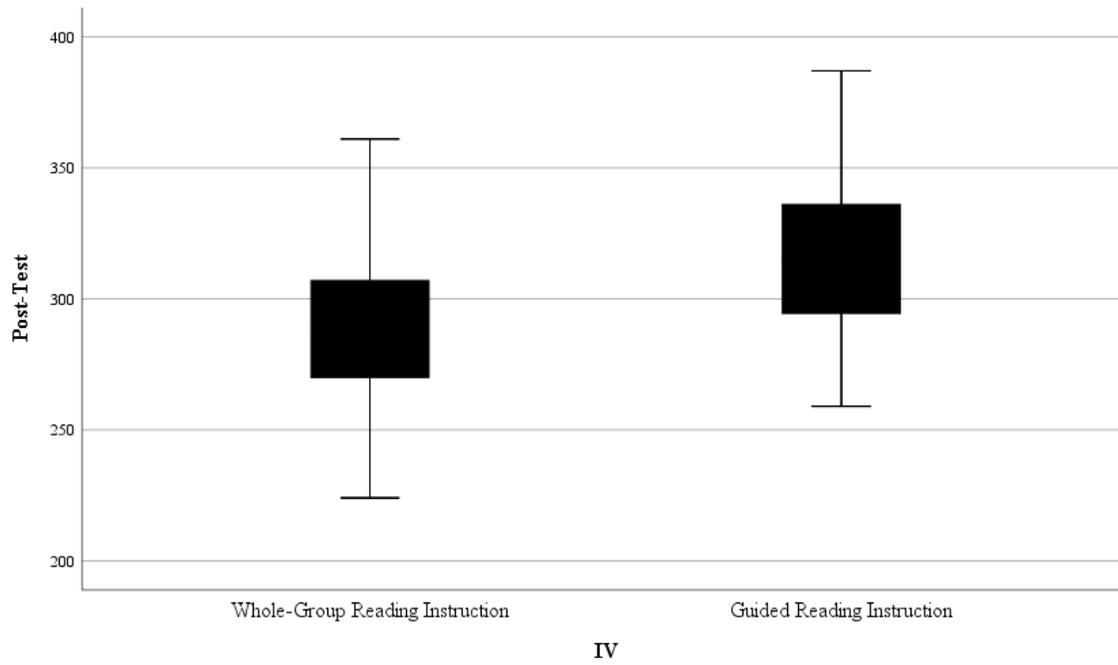


Figure 3. Box-and-Whisker plot for the dependent variable.

Assumption Tests

Warner (2013) stated that the following assumptions must be met to conduct a valid analysis of covariance (ANCOVA): normality, independence of observations, linearity, homoscedasticity, and homogeneity of regression slopes. The researcher conducted each assumption test before performing the ANCOVA in SPSS.

Tests for normality were conducted by running a Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (KS). The KS was most appropriate for the sample size ($N=340$) in this study. KS is required for samples greater than 50 (Warner, 2013). Since $p > .05$, the results of the KS indicated no statistical significance for the pre-test and post-test variable. Therefore, the data represented a normal distribution for the pre-test reading achievement scores and the post-test reading achievement scores (see Table 8).

Table 8

Test of Normality via the Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Post-Test	Whole-Group Reading Instruction	.054	156	.200 [*]
	Guided Reading Instruction	.052	184	.200 [*]
Pre-Test	Whole-Group Reading Instruction	.053	156	.200 [*]
	Guided Reading Instruction	.057	184	.200 [*]

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The researcher used a series of frequency histograms to assess the assumption of normality further. As shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5, the data represented a normal distribution with acceptable skewness.

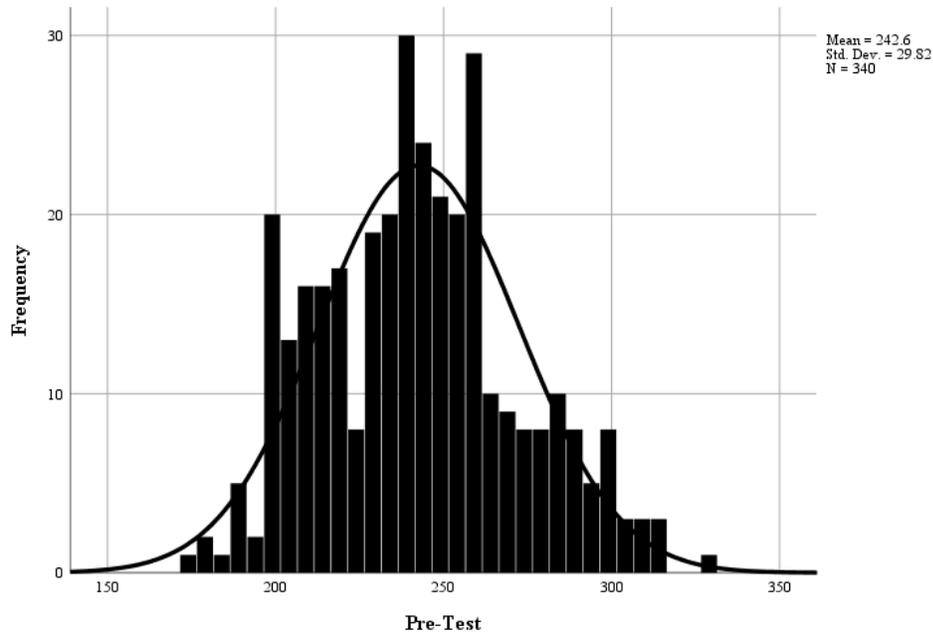


Figure 4. Pre-Test Frequency Histogram for the sample

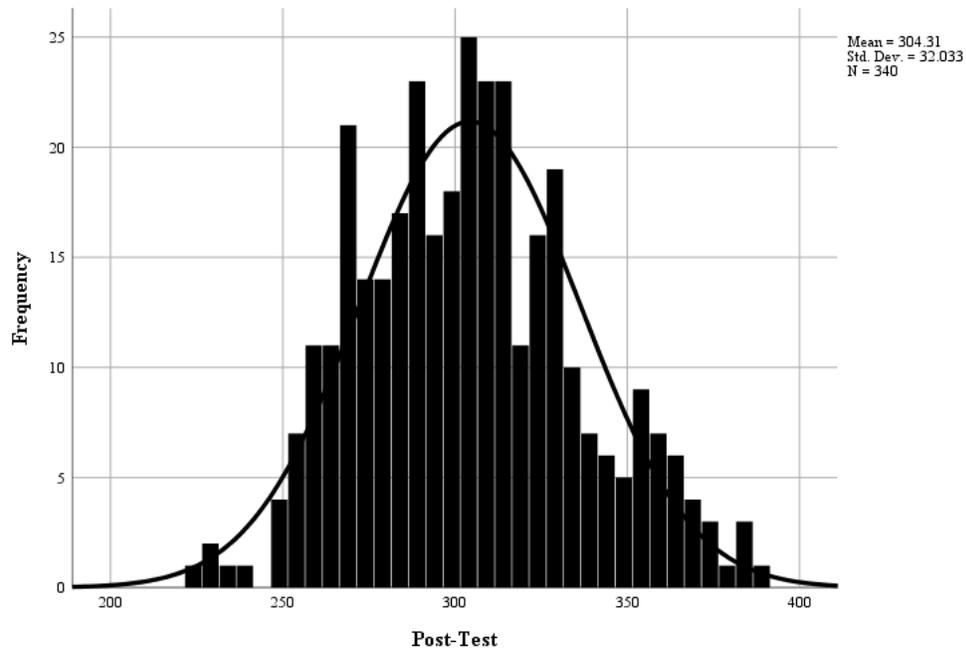


Figure 5. Post-Test Frequency Histogram for the sample

The assumption of independence of observations was met because there were different participants in each group, each participant had their reading achievement scores, and the reading achievement score of one participant did not affect the reading achievement score of another participant (Green & Salkind, 2013). In addition, the researcher tested assumptions of linearity and assumption of bivariate normal distribution (homoscedasticity). The researcher produced scatter plots between the covariate of pre-test reading achievement scores and the dependent variable of post-test reading achievement scores for each group (Warner, 2013).

The researcher found no significant interaction within the scatter plots thereby confirming the assumption of linearity and a normal distribution of the bivariate scores (see Figure 6). The scatter plot illustrated linearity due to the line formed by the plotted scores. The plotted scores also formed the classic “cigar shape” thus confirming bivariate normal distribution (Warner, 2013).

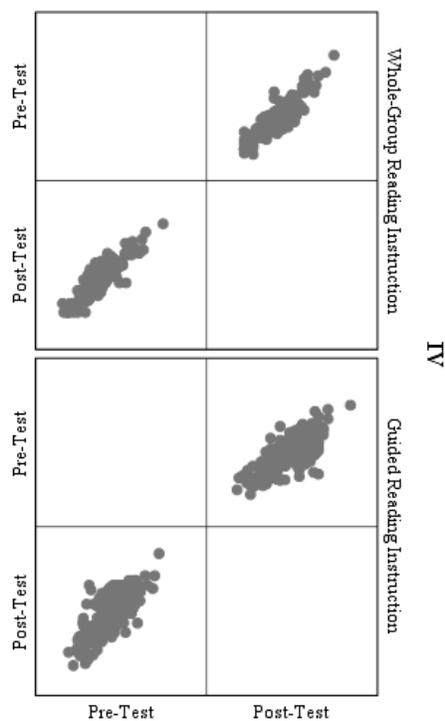


Figure 6. Scatter plot for the covariate and dependent variable for both groups.

The researcher tested the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes to examine the interaction between the dependent variable and the covariate (see Table 9). The assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes revealed $F(1, 336) = 3.817, p = .052$. Since $p > .05$, the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was met.

Table 9

Test of Homogeneity of Slopes

Source	Type III				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	342780.480	3	114260.160	7568.021	.000
Intercept	20927.989	1	20927.989	1386.165	.000
Treatment_IV	760.469	1	760.469	50.370	.000
PreTest	259317.886	1	259317.886	17175.920	.000
Treatment_IV * PreTest	57.624	1	57.624	3.817	.052
Error	5072.847	336	15.098		
Total	31834383.00	340			
	0				
Corrected Total	347853.326	339			

The Levene's Test for Equality of Variance was conducted to test for assumptions of equal variances (Warner, 2013). The Levene's test found that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met, $F(1,338) = 2.316, p = .129$ (see Table 10).

Table 10

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig.
2.316	1	338	.129

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis stated, “There is no statistically significant difference between the reading achievement scores of third-grade students who participate in guided reading instruction and third-grade students who participate in whole-group reading instruction while controlling for pre-test reading achievement scores.” The null hypothesis was tested using an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The researcher divided participants into two naturally occurring groups based on two levels of the independent variable, guided reading instruction (Group 1) or whole-group reading instruction (Group 2). According to Gall et al. (2007), naturally occurring groups are groups of participants that exist by nature and are not randomly assigned or otherwise manipulated by the researcher.

There was a statistically significant difference in post-test reading achievement scores for the two groups of participants, $F(1, 337) = 1871.003, p < .001, \eta^2 = .847$. See Table 11 for Tests of Between-Subjects Effects.

The partial Eta Squared value designated the effect size and was compared with Cohen’s (1988) guidelines. The effect size was calculated using the formula $\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df}$. Consistent with Warner’s (2013) interpretation of effect sizes, the value of .847, or 85%, indicated a large effect. Statistical power was adequate and equal to 0.7 (Warner, 2013).

The findings reject the null hypothesis (see Table 11). The results suggested that guided reading instruction is associated with a higher mean reading achievement score while controlling for prior knowledge (i.e., pre-test reading achievement score).

Table 11

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	342722.855 ^a	2	171361.428	11256.043	.000
Intercept	22834.265	1	22834.265	1499.891	.000
PreTest	276689.541	1	276689.541	18174.623	.000
Treatment_IV	28484.053	1	28484.053	1871.003	.000
Error	5130.471	337	15.224		
Total	31834383.00	340			
	0				
Corrected Total	347853.326	339			

The researcher did not perform post hoc tests because the ANCOVA compared fewer than three groups (levels of the independent variable). Warner (2013) confirmed that post hoc tests for two groups are obsolete and fail to reveal any further pairwise comparisons.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Within low-income communities, the capacity to capitalize on language, culture, and communication has been stifled by an incongruence with educational expectations. Curry, Reeves, and McIntyre (2016) argued that the connection between schools and the communities they serve provides a catalyst for literacy practices that can improve overall academic achievement. Considerable attention has been given to how effective reading instruction affects student achievement (Pressley, Billman, Perry, Reffitt, & Reynolds, 2015). Chiang et al. (2017) contended that previous studies examined how reading instruction narrowly targeted specific skills and impacted limited outcomes (e.g., how vocabulary instruction affected vocabulary acquisition). As a result, this study examined all aspects of reading achievement (i.e., overall reading comprehension) based on instructional context. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the findings, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of the causal-comparative (non-experimental) study was to compare the instructional context of reading instruction to reading achievement scores for third-grade students. The study examined reading achievement among public schools serving socioeconomically disadvantaged populations (i.e., Title I schools). The researcher compared the reading achievement score of participants at Title I elementary schools that previously implemented guided reading instruction with the reading achievement score of participants at Title I elementary schools that previously implemented whole-group reading instruction. The setting for the study included Title I elementary schools ($n=4$) located in an urban school district in the Southeastern region of the United States.

The null hypothesis stated, “There is no statistically significant difference between the reading achievement scores of third-grade students who participate in guided reading instruction and third-grade students who participate in whole-group reading instruction while controlling for pre-test reading achievement scores.” A statistically significant difference was found between the group of participants previously receiving guided reading instruction and the group of participants previously receiving whole-group reading instruction. The null hypothesis was rejected. The results suggested that guided reading instruction is associated with a higher mean reading achievement score while controlling for prior knowledge (i.e., pre-test reading achievement score).

Similarly, Kent, Wanzek, and Al Otaiba (2017) determined that supplementary reading instruction, which may be facilitated through guided reading instruction, led to improved reading achievement. Fountas and Pinnell (2017) reiterated that guided reading instruction is an effective practice that requires thoughtful instructional planning and assessment uses. Hudson and Walker (2017) argued “while highly effective, guided reading alone is not enough to fully develop students’ literacy abilities” (p. 67). For example, guided reading instruction is not merely small-group instruction. Guided reading instruction should not be narrowly focused on improving a student’s level of reading comprehension. Martinez (2016) revealed that the function of guided reading instruction is to teach students the skills, strategies, and processes necessary to read effectively (as cited in Hudson & Walker, 2017).

In contrast, whole-group reading instruction focuses primarily on explicit instruction in the context of an entire class of students. Guided reading instruction deemphasizes this approach in favor of learning to read through the act of reading leveled texts that are accessible to the reader (Denton, Fletcher, Taylor, Barth, & Vaughn, 2014).

Furthermore, a meta-analysis revealed that whole-group reading instruction only impacted reading performance when students were taught how to self-monitor their reading (Guzman, Goldberg, & Swanson, 2018). Incidentally, Lin et al. (2017) argued that whole-group instruction increased the frequency at which students could regularly interact with each other. However, Hollo and Hirn (2015) insisted that “opportunities to respond and active engagement were significantly higher during small-group lessons” (p. 30). In the same way, Sheils and Rutherford (2014) and DiCarlo, Pierce, Baumgartner, Harris, and Ota (2012) reported that whole-group instruction demonstrated minimal student interaction and a negative relationship between children's attentiveness and the length of the instructional activity. The implications of these previous studies suggest that small-group instruction (e.g., guided reading instruction) may be more appropriate for students usually disengaged by traditional approaches to reading instruction.

The results of this study supported Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of human learning (SCT). SCT contends that the context of learning, particularly those related to social and cultural surroundings, provide the foundation for human intelligence. Vygotsky (1986) argued that learning is a social process. Hence, literacy instruction capitalized on Vygotsky's (1986) theory by implementing numerous pedagogical practices that grouped students by ability levels (e.g., high, average, and below-average).

According to Tiernan and Kerins (2014), “the development of literacy in the mainstream class context requires a commitment on the part of teachers to consider alternatives to traditional pedagogical approaches” (p. 45). Additionally, two dilemmas arise given the context of literacy instruction within the 21st-century: the use of conventional basal readers have waned in exchange for digital content, and more rigorous curricula standards emphasize higher levels of text

complexity and higher levels of expected reading achievement (i.e., Lexile scores) at younger ages (Hiebert & Mesmer, 2013). Applying Vygotsky's (1986) theoretical framework, guided reading instruction offers a new pedagogical model "based upon their capacity for learning to read; that is, they receive instruction within their zone of proximal development" (Antonacci, 2000, p. 32). Guided reading instruction is a research-based and evidence-based instructional practice with a demonstrated effect on reading achievement.

Even still, Cuticelli, Collier-Meek, and Coyne (2016) found that teacher observation and performance feedback had the greatest effect on whether a reading instructional strategy effectively improved reading achievement. The results of this study provide an avenue for further exploration of reading instruction and reading achievement among public schools serving socioeconomically disadvantaged populations. Through quantitative data analysis, the researcher discovered a statistically significant difference between the reading achievement scores of third-grade students who participate in guided reading instruction and third-grade students who participate in whole-group reading instruction while controlling for pre-test reading achievement scores (see Table 11). Nonetheless, participants overall mean scale scores illustrated below grade level performance when compared to national norms (Renaissance Learning, Inc., 2013).

Based on performance on all instrument items, the Renaissance Star 360® reading assessment (STAR) automatically generates a scaled score (SS) that ranges from zero to 1,400. In a linking study that correlated SS for two versions of the STAR, third-grade students demonstrated a mean SS of 419 with a standard deviation of 128. However, third-grade participants in this study had a mean pre-test score of $M = 242.60$ and the post-test scores for all participants had a mean of $M = 304.31$. Hence, participants in this study scored close to one standard deviation below the norm for their grade level (Renaissance Learning, Inc., 2013).

Even still, the researcher chose third-grade students for two reasons. Third-grade students typically have reached a developmental milestone where they have transitioned from learning to read towards reading to learn. Additionally, pedagogical interventions mitigate the significance of their stage of reading development (Catts, Herrera, Nielsen, & Bridges, 2015; Reutzel, Petscher, & Spichtig, 2015; Wolff, 2016). In this study, participants' mean scale scores highlight the need for early intervention programs which address reading deficits prior to third grade. Most significantly, the study confirms the need for students' continuous exposure to academic discourse and print-rich environments, alongside early literacy interventions to mitigate gaps in reading comprehension (Ferrer et al., 2015; Leu et al., 2015; Samuels & Horowitz, 2017).

Implications

The findings of this study provided practical, empirical, and theoretical implications. An analysis of the instructional context of reading instruction offered empirical evidence informing curriculum theory, instructional strategies and school climate. Allen, Grigsby, and Peters (2015) claimed that school climate promotes school effectiveness. Zenkov et al. (2013) argued that culturally relevant literacy practices help students achieve in school. By testing the sociocultural theory of human learning, the researcher established further evidence to substantiate the theoretical framework (i.e., the sociocultural theory of human learning) which undergirds guided reading instruction.

Additionally, educational leaders desire to know the effectiveness of instructional practices as it relates to measurable student learning outcomes (e.g., reading achievement score). The results of this study illustrate the positive effect of guided reading instruction among socioeconomically disadvantaged populations. Moreover, the study served as a catalyst to further explore effective instructional strategies which address deficits in reading achievement.

The study demonstrated that guided reading instruction could improve reading achievement within Title I elementary schools. Owoh (2016) found that teacher effectiveness informs students' perceptions, academic achievement, and instructional supervision. Additionally, Marchand-Martella, Martella, and Lambert (2015) argued guided reading instruction can support a schoolwide Title I instructional program while also addressing the needs of students who exhibit learning and behavioral challenges. Hence, pedagogy inherently connects to school improvement, school climate, and school culture.

An instructional context represents more than the elaborate modality in which instruction occurs (e.g., whole-group instruction versus small group instruction). Instructional context is positioned within the framework of school climate and school culture. For Title I schools, serving low-income households predominately, school climate can directly affect academic achievement. According to Berkowitz, Moore, Astor, and Benbenishty (2017), supportive school climates can positively impact academic achievement. Therefore, reading instruction should empower students to learn to read while simultaneously acquiring literacy skills which enable them to think critically, communicate effectively, and collaborate to solve real-world problems.

While the findings of this study present an opportunity for educational leaders to adopt guided reading instruction within their elementary schools, educators must be careful to ensure fidelity of implementation. Moreover, Young (2018) posited that "guided reading is not the only answer" (p. 9). Classroom teachers and educational leaders should continuously consider the needs of their student population, the implications of their achievement data, and the resources available to effectively improve reading instruction and reading achievement.

Limitations

Limitations of the study are primarily centered on the sampled population and the overall context of reading achievement within low-income communities. The setting was characterized by an urban community with high population density. Moreover, the participants in the study included third-grade students enrolled in Title I public schools. The researcher chose third-grade students for two reasons. Third-grade students typically have reached a developmental milestone where they have transitioned from learning to read towards reading to learn. Additionally, pedagogical interventions mitigate the significance of their stage of reading development (Catts, Herrera, Nielsen, & Bridges, 2015; Reutzel, Petscher, & Spichtig, 2015; Wolff, 2016). Hence, the results of this study cannot be generalized (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

While the study compared reading achievement among public schools serving socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, the findings are limited by the disproportionate number of participants whose reading achievement score was below the norm for their grade level. The researcher mitigated this limitation by conveniently sampling similar participants to attain a balanced statistical comparison. Inferences were drawn based on whether a statistically significant difference existed between the groups of participants as opposed to the sole difference in pre-test versus post-test reading achievement scores.

The third limitation of this study was the probable variation in the dependent variable due to other causes. Gall et al. (2007) argued that failing to control for prior knowledge could confound research findings. To address this threat to internal validity, the researcher statistically controlled for prior knowledge by using pre-test reading achievement scores from the beginning of the school year. Gall et al. (2007) also indicated that subject selection bias (i.e., lack of randomization) is a major threat to causal-comparative research. The researcher mitigated subject

selection bias by matching subjects on the related independent variable. Participants were divided into two naturally occurring groups based on two levels of the independent variable, guided reading instruction (Group 1) or whole-group reading instruction (Group 2).

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends the following list of future empirical studies or changes in research methodology to advance the body of knowledge related to reading instruction and reading achievement:

1. Utilize a longitudinal study to investigate reading achievement based on at least three to five years of archived reading achievement data.
2. Implement a similar study which samples participants who previously enrolled in a publicly-funded pre-kindergarten program (e.g. Head Start).
3. Implement the study with a larger sample size including multiple school districts where the independent variable and dependent variable are already present (ex-post facto).
4. Consider conducting a similar study within rural or suburban Title I public schools.
5. Extend the research to non-Title I public schools to determine whether or in what manner the socioeconomic status of the sampled population impacts the effect of reading instruction (e.g., guided reading instruction or whole-group reading instruction).
6. Compare reading achievement among fifth-grade students to mitigate the disproportionate number of third-grade students in low-income communities with reading achievement below the norm (i.e., students reading below grade level).
7. Conduct an experimental or quasi-experimental study where the control group is provided whole-group reading instruction, and the treatment group is provided guided reading instruction; include metrics to appraise fidelity of implementation.

8. Consider conducting a similar qualitative or mixed-methods study to include the lived experiences, interviews, or observations of students within Title I public schools.
9. Consider conducting a similar qualitative or mixed-methods study to include the lived experiences, interviews, or observations of teachers within Title I public schools.

REFERENCES

- About, K. S., Bailey, S. K., Petrill, S. A., & Cutting, L. E. (2016). Comprehending text versus reading words in young readers with varying reading ability: distinct patterns of functional connectivity from common processing hubs. *Developmental Science, 19*(4), 632-656. doi:10.1111/desc.12422
- Adelson, J. L., Dickinson, E. R., & Cunningham, B. C. (2016). A multigrade, multiyear statewide examination of reading achievement: Examination of reading achievement examining variability between districts, schools, and students. *Educational Researcher, 45*(4), 258-262.
- Akbasli, S., Sahin, M., & Yaykiran, Z. (2016). The effect of reading comprehension on the performance in science and mathematics. *Journal of Education and Practice, 7*(16), 108-121. Retrieved from <http://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP>
- Allen, N., Grigsby, B., & Peters, M. L. (2015). Does leadership matter? Examining the relationship among transformational leadership, school climate, and student achievement. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 10*(2), 1-22. Retrieved from <http://www.ncpeapublications.org>
- Allington, R.L. (1991). The legacy of "slow it down and make it more concrete." In J. Zutell, & S. McCormick (Eds.), *Learner factors/teacher factors: Issues in literacy research and instruction*, 19-30. Chicago IL: National Reading Conference.
- Allor, J. H., Mathes, P. G., Roberts, J. K., Cheatham, J. P., & Otaiba, S. A. (2014). Is scientifically based reading instruction effective for students with below-average IQs?. *Exceptional Children, 80*(3), 287-306.

- Anderson, R.C. (1977). *Schema-directed processes in language comprehension*. (Technical Report No. 50). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Antón, M. (1999). The discourse of a learner-centered classroom: sociocultural perspectives on teacher-learner interaction in the second language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83(3), 303-318. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0026-7902.00024>
- Antonacci, P. (2000). Reading in the zone of proximal development: Mediating literacy development in beginner readers through guided reading. *Reading Horizons*, 41(1). Retrieved from [http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading horizons](http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading%20horizons)
- Appleman, D. (2000). *Critical encounters in high school English: Teaching literacy theory to adolescents*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Armstrong, C. (2015). In the zone: Vygotskian-inspired pedagogy for sustainability. *Journal of Classroom Interaction*, 50(2), 133-144.
- Ash, G.E., Kuhn, M.R., & Walpole, S. (2009). Analyzing "inconsistencies" in practice: Teachers' continued use of round robin reading. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 25(1), 87-103. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/urw120>
- Autor, D. H., Katz, L. H., & Kearney, M. S. (2008). Trends in U.S. wage inequality: Revising the revisionists. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 90(2), 300–323.
- Baird, A.S. (2015). Beyond the greatest hits: A counterstory of English learner parent involvement. *School Community Journal*, 25(2), 153-175. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/>
- Baker, L., & Wigfield, A. (1999). Dimensions of children's motivation for reading and their relations to reading activity and reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(4), 452-477.

- Baker, D. L., Burns, D., Kame'enui, E. J., Smolkowski, K., & Baker, S. K. (2016). Does supplemental instruction support the transition from Spanish to English reading instruction for first-grade English Learners at risk of reading difficulties? *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 39(4), 226-239. doi:10.1177/0731948715616757
- Bellibas, M.B., & Gumus, S. (2013). The impact of socio-economic status on parental involvement in Turkish primary schools: Perspective of teachers. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 9(3), 178-193.
- Bergen, E., Zuijen, T., Bishop, D., & Jong, P. F. (2017). Why are home literacy environment and children's reading skills associated? What parental skills reveal. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 52(2), 147-160.
- Berkeley, S., Regan, K., Dimitrov, D., Guckert, M., & Ray, S. (2016). Teachers' Basic Knowledge of Reading Instruction: Insights from a Teacher Preparation Program. *Teacher Educators' Journal*, 9, 23-48. Retrieved from http://ateva.org/?page_id=450
- Berkowitz, R., Moore, H., Astor, R. A., & Benbenishty, R. (2016). A research synthesis of the associations between socioeconomic background, inequality, school climate, and academic achievement. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(2), 425-469.
doi:10.3102/0034654316669821
- Bernstein, M.B. (2014). Three planes of practice: Examining intersections of reading identity and pedagogy. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 13(3), 110-129. Retrieved from <https://edlinked.soe.waikato.ac.nz/research/journal/index.php?id=1>
- Betts, E. (1946). *Foundations of reading instruction*. New York: American Book Company

- Birgisdóttir, F., Gestsdóttir, S., & Thorsdóttir, F. (2015). The role of behavioral self-regulation in learning to read: A 2-year longitudinal study of Icelandic preschool children. *Early Education and Development, 26*(5-6), 807-828.
- Bitter, C., O'Day, J., Gubbins, P., & Socias, M. (2009). What works to improve student literacy achievement? An examination of instructional practices in a balanced literacy approach. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 14*(1), 17-44.
doi:10.1080/10824660802715403
- Blanton, M.V. (2015). Keys to reducing summer regression: The reader, routine, and relationship. *Journal of Organizational and Educational Leadership, 1*(1). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/joel/>
- Boltzmann, M., Mohammadi, B., Samii, A., Münte, T. F., & Rüsseler, J. (2017). Structural changes in functionally illiterate adults after intensive training. *Neuroscience, 344*, 229-242. doi:10.1016/j.neuroscience.2016.12.049
- Borman, G. D., & D'Agostino, J. V. (1996). Title I and student achievement: A meta-analysis of federal evaluation results. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 18*(4), 309-326.
- Botsas, G. (2017). Differences in strategy use in the reading comprehension of narrative and science texts among students with and without learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal, 15*(1), 139-162. Retrieved from <http://www.ldw-ldcj.org/>
- Brewer, B.M. (2016). Navigating nonfiction through drama: using choral reading to create a transaction with the text. *English Journal, 105*(4), 76. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/journals/ej/issues/v105-4>

- Bridges, E.M. (2004). Racial identity and psychological coping strategies of African American males at a predominantly white university. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation).
University of Georgia, Athens, GA
- Brighton, C. M., Moon, T. R., & Huang, F. L. (2015). Advanced readers in reading first classrooms. *Journal for The Education of The Gifted*, 38(3), 257-293.
doi:10.1177/0162353215592501
- Brown, A. A., & Green, R. L. (2014, March). Practices Used by Nationally Blue Ribbon Award Winning Principals to Improve Student Achievement in High-Poverty Schools. In National Forum of Applied Educational Research Journal (Vol. 27).
- Bulut, A. (2017). Improving 4th grade primary school students' reading comprehension skills. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(1), 23-30. doi:10.13189/ujer.2017.050103
- Burney, V.H., & Beilke, J.R. (2008). The constraints of poverty on high achievement. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 31(3), 171-197. Retrieved from <http://www.prufrock.com>
- Cain, K. (2009). Children's reading comprehension difficulties: A consideration of the precursors and consequences. In C. Wood & V. Connelly (Eds.), *Contemporary perspectives on reading and writing* (pp. 59-76). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Carta, J. J., Greenwood, C.R., Atwater, J., McConnell, S.R., Goldstein, H., & Kaminski, R.A. (2015). Identifying preschool children for higher tiers of language and early literacy instruction within a response to intervention framework. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 36(4), 281-291. doi:10.1177/1053815115579937
- Cascio, E. U., & Reber, S. (2013). The poverty gap in school spending following the introduction of Title I. *The American Economic Review*, 103(3), 423-427.

- Cassidy, J., & Ortlieb, E. (2013). The evolution of what's hot in literacy. *Journal of Balanced Reading Instruction, 1*(2). Retrieved from <http://www.balancedreadinginstruction.com>
- Cervetti, G. N., & Hiebert, E. H. (2015). The sixth pillar of reading instruction. *The Reading Teacher, 68*(7), 548-551.
- Chall, J. (1967). *Learning to read: The great debate*. Fort Worth: Harcourt-Brace & Company.
- Chatila, H., & Al Husseiny, F. (2017). Effect of cooperative learning strategy on students' acquisition and practice of scientific skills in biology. *Journal of Education in Science, Environment, and Health, 3*(1), 88-99. Retrieved from <http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr/jeseh>
- Chavkin, N.F., & Williams, D.L., Jr. (1989). Low-income parents' attitudes towards parent involvement in education. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 16*(3), 17-28.
- Chiang, H., Walsh, E., Shanahan, T., Gentile, C., Maccarone, A., Waits, T., Carlson, B., Rikoon, S. (2017). *An exploration of instructional practices that foster language development and comprehension: Evidence from prekindergarten through grade 3 in Title I schools*. (Report No. NCEE 2017-4024). Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20174024/>
- Christopher, M. E., Keenan, J. M., Hulslander, J., DeFries, J. C., Miyake, A., Wadsworth, S. J., ... & Olson, R. K. (2016). The genetic and environmental etiologies of the relations between cognitive skills and components of reading ability. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 145*(4), 451.
- Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub.L. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241 (1964).
- Clarà, M. (2017). How instruction influences conceptual development: Vygotsky's theory revisited. *Educational Psychologist, 52*(1), 50-62.

- Clay, M. M. (1991). *Becoming literate: The construction of inner control*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cook, A.L. (2015). Building connections to literacy learning among English Language Learners: Exploring the role of school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling, 13*(9). Retrieved from <http://jsc.montana.edu/>
- Crosnoe, R., Benner, A. D., & Davis-Kean, P. (2016). Preschool Enrollment, Classroom Instruction, Elementary School Context, and the Reading Achievement of Children from Low-Income Families. In *Family Environments, School Resources, and Educational Outcomes* (pp. 19-47). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Crow, S.R. & Kastello, L. (2016). The dispositions of elementary school children of individualistic and collectivist cultures who are intrinsically motivated to seek information. *School Library Research, 19*. Retrieved from www.ala.org/aasl/slr
- Cummins, J. (2011). Reading instruction and reading achievement among ELL students. *Research into Practice, 5*.
- Curry, D.L., Reeves, E., McIntyre, C.J. (2016). Connecting schools and families: Understanding the influence of home literacy practices. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education, 4*(2), 69-77.
- Cuticelli, M., Collier-Meek, M., & Coyne, M. (2016). Increasing the quality of Tier 1 reading instruction: Using performance feedback to increase opportunities to respond during implementation of a core reading program. *Psychology in the Schools, 53*(1), 89-105.
- Danish, J., Saleh, A., Andrade, A., & Bryan, B. (2017). Observing Complex Systems Thinking in the Zone of Proximal Development. *Instructional Science: An International Journal of the Learning Sciences, 45*(1), 5-24.

- Day, S.L., & Connor, C.M. (2017). Examining the Relations between Self-Regulation and Achievement in Third-Grade Students. *Assessment for Effective Intervention, 42*(2), 97-109.
- Degener, S., & Berne, J. (2014). Speaking and listening during small-group reading instruction. *Voices from the Middle, 22*(1), 43. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/journals/vm/issues/v22-1>
- Delacruz, S. (2014). Using Nearpod in elementary guided reading groups. *TechTrends, 58*(5), 62-69.
- Denton, C.A., Fletcher, J.M., Taylor, W.P., Barth, A.E., & Vaughn, S. (2014). An experimental evaluation of guided reading and explicit interventions for primary-grade students at-risk for reading difficulties. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 7*(3), 268-293. doi:10.1080/19345747.2014.906010
- Denton, C. A., Wolters, C. A., York, M. J., Swanson, E., Kulesz, P. A., & Francis, D. J. (2015). Adolescents' use of reading comprehension strategies: Differences related to reading proficiency, grade level, and gender. *Learning and Individual Differences, 37*, 81-95.
- DeVries, R. (2000). Vygotsky, Piaget, and education: A reciprocal assimilation of theories and educational practices. *New Ideas in Psychology, 18*, 187-213. Retrieved from [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0732118X\(00\)00008-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0732118X(00)00008-8)
- DiCarlo, C.F., Pierce, S.H., Baumgartner, J., Harris, M.E., & Ota, C. (2012). Whole-Group instruction practices and children's attention: A preliminary report. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 26*(2), 154-168. doi:10.1080/02568543.2012.657744

- DiPerna, J. C., Lei, P., Cheng, W., Hart, S. C., & Bellinger, J. (2018). A cluster randomized trial of the Social Skills Improvement System-Classwide Intervention Program (SSIS-CIP) in first grade. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 110*(1), 1.
- Dittlinger, L. H., & Lerman, D. C. (2011). Further analysis of picture interference when teaching word recognition to children with autism. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 44*, 341–349. doi:10.1901/jaba.2011.44-341
- Dole, S., Bloom, L., & Kowalske, K. (2016). Transforming pedagogy: Changing perspectives from teacher-centered to learner-centered. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning, 10*(1), 45-58. doi:10.7771/1541-5015.1538
- Dongyu, Z., Fanyu, B., & Wanyi, D. (2013). Sociocultural Theory applied to Second Language Learning: Collaborative learning with reference to the Chinese context. *International Education Studies, 6*(9), 165-174.
- Donohue, B. B. (2001). Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity and Native Community in Early America. *American Indian Culture & Research Journal, 25*(3), 227-230.
- Dorsey, W. (2015). Balanced Reading Basals and the impact on third grade reading achievement. *Journal of Organizational and Educational Leadership, 1*(2). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/joel/>
- Dougherty, C. (2014). Starting off strong: The importance of early learning. *American Educator, 38*(2), 14-18. Retrieved from <http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae>
- Dumont, H., Trautwein, U., Nagy, G., & Nagengast, B. (2014). Quality of parental homework involvement: Predictors and reciprocal relations with academic functioning in the reading domain. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 106*(1), 144.

- Duru, S. (2015). A metaphor analysis of elementary student teachers' conceptions of teachers in student- and teacher-centered contexts. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, (60), 281-300. doi:10.14689/ejer.2015.60.16
- Eastman, N.J. (2016). Dropout factories: The profitability of "at-risk" students. *Philosophical Studies in Education*, 47, 68-77. Retrieved from <http://ovpes.org/journal>
- Eberhard-Moscicka, A. K., Jost, L. B., Raith, M., & Maurer, U. (2015). Neurocognitive mechanisms of learning to read: print tuning in beginning readers related to word-reading fluency and semantics but not phonology. *Developmental Science*, 18(1), 106-118.
- Edmondson, J. (2004). *Understanding and applying critical policy study: Reading educators advocating for change*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Ehri, L., Nunes, S., Willows, D., Schuster, B. V., Yaghoub-Zadeh, Z., & Shanahan, T. (2001). Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to read: Evidence from the National Reading Panel's meta-analysis. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(3), 250-287. Retrieved from w.jstor.org/stable/748111
- Ellis, R. (2004). Task-based language learning and teaching. *English in China*, 26, 43-46.
- Engberg, M.E. & Wolniak, G.C. (2010) Examining the effects of high school contexts on postsecondary enrollment. *Research in Higher Education*, 51(2), 132-153. doi:10.1007/s11162-009-9150-y
- Englishtina, I. (2015). Developing Socio-Cultural Scaffolding Model to elicit learners' speech production. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(36), 20-28.
- Erdener, M.A. (2016). Principals' and teachers' practices about parent involvement in schooling. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(12A), 151-159. doi:10.13189/ujer.2016.041319

- Erwin, R. W. (2016). Sight-Word Practice in a Flash! *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 52(1), 35-38.
- Evans, M. P., & Radina, R. (2014). Great expectations? Critical discourse analysis of Title I school-family compacts. *School Community Journal*, 24(2), 107.
- Fabre-Merchán, P., Torres-Jara, G., Andrade-Dominguez, F., Ortiz-Zurita, M.J., & Alvarez-Muñoz, P. (2017). A phenomenological study: The impacts of developing phonetic awareness through technological resources on English Language Learners' (ELL) communicative competences. *English Language Teaching*, 10(12), 83-87.
doi:10.5539/elt.v10n12p83
- Fair, G.C., & Combs, D. (2011). Nudging fledgling teen readers from the nest: From round robin to real reading. *Clearing House*, 84(5), 224-230. doi:10.1080/00098655.2011.575417
- Farrell, M., Elkin, S., Broadus, J., & Bloom, D. (2011). *Subsidizing Employment Opportunities for Low-Income Families: A Review of State Employment Programs Created Through the TANF Emergency Fund*. OPRE Report 2011-338, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Farrell, T. & Jacobs, G. (2016). Practicing what we preach: Teacher reflection groups on cooperative learning. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 19(4). Retrieved from <http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/>
- Fernández, E., & López, G. R. (2017). When parents behave badly: A critical policy analysis of parent involvement in schools. In *Critical Approaches to Education Policy Analysis* (pp. 111-129). Springer International Publishing.
- Ferrandino, V. L., & Tirozzi, G. (2004). Wanted: A comprehensive literacy agenda PreK–12. [Adventorial] *Education Week*, 23(24), 29. Retrieved from <http://www.nassp.org>

- Ferrer, E., Shaywitz, B. A., Holahan, J. M., Marchione, K. E., Michaels, R., & Shaywitz, S. E. (2015). Achievement gap in reading is present as early as first grade and persists through adolescence. *The Journal of Pediatrics, 167*(5), 1121-1125.
- Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2014). Scaffolded reading instruction of content-area texts. *The Reading Teacher, 67*(5), 347-351.
- Ford, M.P., & Opitz, M.F. (2011). Looking back to move forward with guided reading. *Reading Horizons, 50*(1). Retrieved from <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/readinghorizons>
- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (n.d.). *Guided reading program: Research base for guided reading as an instructional approach*. Retrieved from www.scholastic.com/guidedreading
- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2012). Guided reading: The romance and the reality. *The Reading Teacher, 66*(4), 268–284. doi:10.1002/TRTR.01123
- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2017). *Guided reading: Responsive teaching* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Freeman, I. A. (2014). *Seeds of Revolution: A Collection of Axioms, Passages, and Proverbs, Volume 2*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse LLC.
- French, J.N., Ellsworth, N.J., & Amoruso, M.Z. (1995). *Reading and Learning Disabilities*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc.
- Freiberg, H., & Stein, T. (1999). Measuring, improving and sustaining healthy learning environments. In *School Climate: Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments* (pp. 11-29). London: Falmer Press.

- Fryer Jr, R. G. (2014). Injecting charter school best practices into traditional public schools: Evidence from field experiments. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129(3), 1355-1407.
- Fullan, M. (Ed.). (2009). *The challenge of change (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Gaffner, J., Johnson, K., Torres-Elias, A., & Dryden, L. (2014). Guided reading in first-fourth grade: Theory to practice. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, 2(2), 117-126. Retrieved from www.texasreaders.org
- Gall, M., Gall, J., & Borg, W. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Gallman, R. E. (1988). Changes in the level of literacy in a new community of early America. *Journal of Economic History*, 48(3), 567.
- Gammon, C., & Collins, J. (2016). The effects of pre-kindergarten reading skills on first-grade reading achievement. *Literacy Summit Yearbook*, 94.
- Gamse, B.C., Bloom, H.S., Kemple, J.J., & Jacob, R.T. (2008). *Reading First Impact Study: Interim Report*. NCEE 2008-4016. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20084016/>
- Garbacz, S. A., McDowall, P. S., Schaughency, E., Sheridan, S. M., & Welch, G. W. (2015). A multidimensional examination of parent involvement across child and parent characteristics. *The Elementary School Journal*, 115(3), 384-406.
- Gaston, A., Martinez, J., & Martin, E.P. (2016). Embedding literacy strategies in social studies for eighth-grade students. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 7(1), 73-95. Retrieved from <http://jsser.org/>

- Gee, J.P. (1989). What is literacy? *Journal of Education*, 171(1), 18-25. Retrieved from <http://www.bu.edu/journalofeducation/>
- Gerber, D. A. (2016). The Men and Women We Want: Gender, Race, and the Progressive Era Literacy Test Debate. *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 35(4), 109-111.
- Gersten, R., Newman-Gonchar, R., Haymond, K.S., & Dimino, J. (2017). *What Is the Evidence Base to Support Reading Interventions for Improving Student Outcomes in Grades 1-3?* REL 2017-271. Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/>
- Goldenberg, C., Tolar, T., Reese, L., Francis, D., & Meji'a-Arauz, R. (2014). How important is to teach phonemic awareness to children learning to read in Spanish. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51(3), 604-633. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831214529082>
- Goldstein, H., Olszewski, A., Haring, C., Greenwood, C. R., McCune, L., Carta, J., & Kelley, E. S. (2017). Efficacy of a supplemental phonemic awareness curriculum to instruct preschoolers with delays in early literacy development. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 60(1), 89-103.
- Grace, R.A. & Harrington, S.Y. (2015). Our children, our schools: Seeking solutions for improving the climate in urban public schools. *Alabama Journal of Educational Leadership*, 2, 1-14. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/site/aapelorg/home>
- Gray, L., & Reese, D. (1957). *Teaching children to read, 2nd ed.* New York: Ronald Press Company.
- Green, S. B., & Salkind, N. J. (2013). *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and understanding data* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Gross, P. (2010). Not another trend: Secondary-level literacy coaching. *The Clearing House*, 83(1), 130-137. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/vtch20/current>
- Guo, Y., Sun, S., Breit-Smith, A., Morrison, F. J., & Connor, C. M. (2015). Behavioral engagement and reading achievement in elementary-school-age children: A longitudinal cross-lagged analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107(2), 332. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/edu/>
- Gurses, M.O., & Adiguzel, O.C. (2013). The effect of strategy instruction based on the cognitive academic language learning approach over reading comprehension and strategy use. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 2(2), 55-68. doi:10.5539/jel.v2n2p55
- Guthrie, J.T., & Klauda, S.L. (2014). Effects of classroom practices on reading comprehension, engagement, and motivations for adolescents. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 49(4), 387-416.
- Guzman, G., Goldberg, T. S., & Swanson, H. L. (2018). A meta-analysis of self-monitoring on reading performance of K–12 students. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 33(1), 160-168.
- Hairston, A. (2011). Identifying and helping struggling readers. *Journal of the American Academy of Special Education Professionals*, 27-33. Retrieved from <http://www.aasep.org>
- Haladyna, T. M., & Downing, S. M. (1989). The validity of a taxonomy of multiple-choice item-writing rules. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 1, 51–78. Retrieved from <http://buros.org/applied-measurement-education-journal>
- Han, M. (2015). An empirical study on the application of cooperative learning to English listening classes. *English Language Teaching*, 8(3), 177-184. doi:10.5539/elt.v8n3p177

- Hanke, V. (2014). Guided reading: young pupils' perspectives on classroom practice. *Literacy*, 48(3), 136-143. doi:10.1111/lit.12019
- Harper, L.J. (2011). Nursery rhyme knowledge and phonological awareness in preschool children. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 7(1), 65-78. Retrieved from <http://jolle.coe.uga.edu>
- Harris, S., & Butaud, G. L. (2016). Strategies for supporting elementary students of poverty in reading. In *Social Justice Instruction* (pp. 171-183). Springer, Cham.
- Harris, T.L., & Hodges, R. E. (1995). *The Literacy Dictionary*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Harris, Y.R., & Schroeder, V.M. (2013). Language Deficits or Differences: What We Know about African American Vernacular English in the 21st Century. *International Education Studies*, 6(4), 194-204. doi:10.5539/ies.v6n4p194
- Harry, B., & Klingner, J. (2007). Discarding the Deficit Model. *Educational Leadership*, 64(5), 16-21. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx>
- Hayes, C. (2017). Measuring success one (sight) syllable at a time. *Odyssey: New Directions in Deaf Education*, 18, 62-65. Retrieved from <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>
- He, Y., Cooper, J.E., & Tangredi, C. (2015). Why do I stay? A case study of a secondary English teacher in an urban high school. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 42(1), 49-66. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/teaceducquar.42.1.49>
- Henriksen, B. (1999). Three dimensions of vocabulary development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21(2), 303-317.
- Hernandez, D.J. (2012). *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

- Hiebert, E. H., & Mesmer, H. A. E. (2013). Upping the ante of text complexity in the Common Core State Standards: Examining its potential impact on young readers. *Educational Researcher*, 42(1), 44-51.
- Hilado, A. V., Kallemeyn, L., & Phillips, L. (2013). Examining understandings of parent involvement in early childhood programs. *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, 15(2). Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu>
- Hollo, A., & Hirn, R. G. (2015). Teacher and student behaviors in the contexts of grade-level and instructional grouping. *Preventing School Failure*, 59(1), 30.
doi:10.1080/1045988X.2014.919140
- Hudson, A. K., & Walker, M. (2017). Supporting Effective Guided Reading Instruction for All Students. *Texas Association for Literacy Education Yearbook*, 67.
- Huggins, G. E., & Edwards, R. (2011). Scaffolding to improve reading comprehension and to write scholarly research sciences. *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, 1(16), 30-36.
- Iaquinta, A. (2006). Guided reading: A research-based response to the challenges of early reading instruction. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33(6), 413-418
- Jackson, C. K., Johnson, R., & Persico, C. (2014). *The effect of school finance reforms on the distribution of spending, academic achievement, and adult outcomes* (No. w20118). National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w20118>
- Jackson, C. K., Johnson, R. C., & Persico, C. (2015). The effects of school spending on educational and economic outcomes: Evidence from school finance reforms. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 131(1), 157-218.

- Jacobs, G.M., & Kimura, H. (2013). *Cooperative learning and teaching*. In the series, *English language teacher development*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press.
- Jitendra, A. K., Dupuis, D. N., Star, J. R., & Rodriguez, M. C. (2016). The effects of schema-based instruction on the proportional thinking of students with mathematics difficulties with and without reading difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 49(4), 354-367.
- John, M. C. (2017). Leadership style, school climate, and the institutional commitment of teachers. In *International Forum Journal* (Vol. 1, No. 2).
- Johnson, R. C. (2015). Follow the money: School spending from Title I to adult earnings. *RSF*.
- Johnson, D.W., & Johnson, F.P. (2013). *Joining together: Group theory and group skills* (11th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Holubec, E. J. (1993). "Cooperation in the classroom." Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.
- Jones, S. (2013). Literacies in the body. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(7), 525-529. doi:10.1002/JAAL.182
- Jones, S. M., Kim, J., LaRusso, M., Kim, H. Y., Selman, R., Uccelli, P., ... & Snow, C. (2016). Experimental Effects of Word Generation on Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Perspective Taking in High Poverty Middle Schools. *Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness*.
- Juel, C. (1988). Learning to read and write: A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grade. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80, 437-447. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/edu/>
- Kaiser, A. P., & Hemmeter, M. L. (2014). Introduction to Special Issue on the Center on Response to Intervention in Early Childhood: Developing Evidence-Based Tools for a

- Multi-Tier Approach to Preschool Language and Early Literacy Instruction. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 36(4), 243-245. doi:10.1177/1053815115585088
- Kara, A. (2010). The effect of a "learning theories" unit on students' attitudes toward learning. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(3), 100-113.
doi:10.14221/ajte.2009v34n3.5
- Kempert, S., Götz, R., Blatter, K., Tibken, C., Artelt, C., Schneider, W., & Stanat, P. (2016). Training early literacy related skills. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 16.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01803>
- Kendeou, P., Broek, P., Helder, A., & Karlsson, J. (2014). A cognitive view of reading comprehension: Implications for reading difficulties. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 29(1), 10-16.
- Kent, S. C., Wanzek, J., & Al Otaiba, S. (2017). Reading Instruction for Fourth-Grade Struggling Readers and the Relation to Student Outcomes. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 33(5), 395-411.
- Konza, D. (2014). Teaching Reading: Why the “Fab Five” should be the “Big Six.” *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(12). Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol39/iss12/10>
- Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities*. New York: Crown.
- Kroll, L., McLaughlin, T.F., Neyman, J., Johnson, K., & Beiers, K. (2013). The effects of direct instruction on reading first grade high frequency sight words with a student with severe behavior disorders. *Educational Research International*, 2(1), 13-21. Retrieved from <http://www.savap.org.pk/>

- Kuhn, M., Rasinski, T., & Zimmerman, B. (2014). Integrated fluency instruction: Three approaches for working with struggling readers. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 7(1), 71-82.
- Kwiatkowska-White, B., Kirby, J. R., & Lee, E. A. (2016). A longitudinal study of Reading comprehension achievement from grades 3 to 10: Investigating models of stability, cumulative growth, and compensation. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 34(2), 153-165.
- Lacour, M., & Tissington, L. (2011). The effects of poverty on academic achievement. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6(7), 522-527. Retrieved from <http://www.academicjournals.org/ERR>
- Lantolf, J. P., Thorne, S. L., & Poehner, M. E. (2015). Sociocultural theory and second language development. *Theories in Second Language Acquisition: An Introduction*, 207-226.
- Lassiter v. Northampton County Board of Elections. (n.d.). *Oyez*. Retrieved from <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1958/584>
- Latham, G. (2013). The responsive reading teacher. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(8). Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2013v38n8.3>
- Lemberger, M. E., Selig, J. P., Bowers, H., & Rogers, J. E. (2015). Effects of the student success skills program on executive functioning skills, feelings of connectedness, and academic achievement in a predominantly Hispanic, low-income middle school district. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 93(1), 25-37.
- Leu, D. J., Forzani, E., Rhoads, C., Maykel, C., Kennedy, C., & Timbrell, N. (2015). The new literacies of online research and comprehension: Rethinking the reading achievement gap. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 50(1), 37-59.

- Leu, D. J., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J., Castek, J., & Henry, L. A. (2017). New literacies: A dual-level theory of the changing nature of literacy, instruction, and assessment. *Journal of Education, 197*(2), 1-18.
- Levine, A., Ferenzo, O., & Reves, T. (2000). "EFL academic reading and modern technology: How can we turn our students into independent critical readers?" *TESLEJ, 4*(4), 75-91.
- Levitt, S. D., List, J. A., Neckermann, S., & Sadoff, S. (2016). The behaviorist goes to school: Leveraging behavioral economics to improve educational performance. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 8*(4), 183-219.
- Lewis, J., Asberry, J., DeJarnett, G., & King, G. (2016). The best practices for shaping school culture for instructional leaders. *Alabama Journal of Educational Leadership, 3*, 57-63.
Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/site/aapelorg/home>
- Lin, T., Justice, L.M., Emery, A.A., Mashburn, A.J., & Pentimonti, J.M. (2017). Impacts of teacher-child managed whole-group language and literacy instruction on the depth of preschoolers' social interaction. *Early Education & Development, 28*(4), 457-474.
doi:10.1080/10409289.2016.1246287
- Linkersdörfer, J., Jurcoane, A., Lindberg, S., Kaiser, J., Hasselhorn, M., Fiebach, C. J., & Lonnemann, J. (2014). The association between gray matter volume and reading proficiency: a longitudinal study of beginning readers. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience.*
- Linkon, S. L. (2016). Reading Matters: Framing a Critical Conversation About Reading Across the Curriculum. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry, 4*(2), 1-3.
- Lipman, P. (2015). Urban education policy under Obama. *Journal of Urban Affairs, 37*(1), 57-61.

- Lipp, J. R., & Helfrich, S. R. (2016). Key reading recovery strategies to support classroom guided reading instruction. *The Reading Teacher, 69*(6), 639–646. doi:10.1002/trtr.1442
- Lowenstein, A.E., Friedman-Krauss, A.H., Raver, C.C., Jones, S.M., & Pess, R.A. (2016). School climate, teacher-child closeness, and low-income children's academic skills in kindergarten. *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology, 5*(2), 89-108. doi:10.5539/jedp.v5n2p89
- Lu, L.Y. (2010). Phonics and semiotics for early intervention. *International Education Studies, 3*(2), 17-26. Retrieved from <http://www.ccsenet.org/ies>
- Ludwig, J., & Mayer, S. (2006). "Culture" and the intergenerational transmission of poverty: The prevention paradox. *Future of Children, 16*(2), 175-196. Retrieved from <http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/journals>
- Lynch, J. (2011). "Every Man Able to Read" Literacy in Early America. Retrieved from <http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/winter11/literacy.cfm>
- Mahapatra, S. (2016). Reading disabilities and PASS Reading Enhancement Programme. *Journal of Education and Practice, 7*(5), 145-149. Retrieved from <http://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP>
- Marchand-Martella, N.E., Martella, R.C., & Lambert, M.C. (2015). Targeted management tips to enhance the effectiveness of tier 2, guided reading instruction. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 50*(3), 169-172. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1053451214542045>
- McBride, J., & Martin, J. T. (1983). Reliability and validity of adaptive ability tests. In D. J. Weiss (Ed.), *New horizons in testing: Latent trait test theory and computerized adaptive testing* (Chapter 11, pp. 224–225). New York: Academic Press.

- McKnight, A.N. (2015). "They never really tried to reach out to us": Examining identities and confronting the emotional distance between urban youth and urban schools. *Critical Questions in Education*, 6(2), 86-102. Retrieved from <http://academyforeducationalstudies.org>
- McLaughlin, M., & Allen, M.B. (2002). *Guided Comprehension: A teaching model for grades 3–8*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- McMaster, C. (2015). "Where is _____?": Culture and the process of change. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 11(1), 16-34. Retrieved from <http://www.wholeschooling.net>
- McNeal, R.B. (2014). Parent involvement, academic achievement and the role of student attitudes and behaviors as mediators. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 2(8), 564-576. doi:10.13189/ujer.2014.020805
- Melekoglu, M.A., & Wilkerson, K.L. (2013). Motivation to read: How does it change for struggling readers with and without disabilities? *International Journal of Instruction*, 6(1), 77-88. Retrieved from <http://www.e-iji.net>
- Mellard, D.F., Woods, K.L., Md Desa, Z.D., & Vuyk, M.A. (2015). Underlying reading-related skills and abilities among adult learners. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 48(3), 310-322. doi:10.1177/0022219413500813
- Meng, J. (2017). An empirical study on the application of cooperative learning to comprehensive English classes in a Chinese independent college. *English Language Teaching*, 10(2), 94-99. doi:10.5539/elt.v10n2p94
- MetaMetrics, Inc. (n.d.). *What is a Lexile measure?* Retrieved January 20, 2011, from <http://lexile.com/aboutlexile/lexile-overview/>

- Meyer, D. K., & Turner, J. C. (2007). Scaffolding emotions in classrooms. In P.A. Schutz & R. Pekrun (Eds.), *Emotion in Education* (pp. 243-258). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Miles, S. B., & Stipek, D. (2006). Contemporaneous and longitudinal associations between social behavior and literacy achievement in a sample of low-income elementary school children. *Child Development, 77*(1), 103-117.
- Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (1998). *Second Language Learning Theories*. London, England: Arnold.
- Mohammed, S., Walker, D. A., Conderman, G., & Pasapia, J. (2016). Implementing Scientific-Based Research: Learning from the History of the Reading First Program. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 15*(1), 27-40.
- Morrissey, T. W., & Vinopal, K. (2017). Center-based early care and education and children's school readiness: do impacts vary by neighborhood poverty? *Developmental Psychology*.
- Naidoo, L., & D'warte, J.A. (2017). The Western Sydney Rustbelt: Recognizing and building on strengths in pre-service teacher education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 42*(4), 69-83. Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/>
- National Center for Education Statistics (1993). *120 Years of Literacy*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit_history.asp
- National Research Council. (2012). *Improving adult literacy instruction: Options for practice and research* (A. M. Lesgold & M. Welch-Ross, Eds.). Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- National Title 1 Association. (n.d.). *About Title 1*. Retrieved from <http://www.title1.org/about/title1>

- Nelson, K. L., Dole, J. A., Hosp, J. L., & Hosp, M. K. (2015). Vocabulary instruction in K-3 low-income classrooms during a reading reform project. *Reading Psychology, 36*(2), 145-172.
- Neuman, S. B. (2017). The Information Book Flood: Is Additional Exposure Enough to Support Early Literacy Development? *The Elementary School Journal, 118*(1), 1-27.
- Newberg, N. A. (2006). *The gift of education: How a tuition guarantee program changed the lives of inner-city youth*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Nicol, D. (2007). E-assessment by design: Using multiple-choice tests to good effect. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 31*(1), 53–64. doi:10.1080/03098770601167922
- Nieto, S. (2010). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Nunnery, J. A., Ross, S. M., & McDonald, A. (2006). A randomized experimental evaluation of the impact of Accelerated Reader/Reading Renaissance implementation on reading achievement in grades 3 to 6. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 11*(1), 1-18.
- Ohlson, M., Swanson, A., Adams-Manning, A., & Byrd, A. (2016). A culture of success-- Examining school culture and student outcomes via a performance framework. *Journal of Education and Learning, 5*(1), 114-127. doi:10.5539/jel.v5n1p114
- Olasehinde, M.O., Akanmode, O.A., Alaiyemola, A.T., & Babatunde, O.T. (2015). Promoting the reading culture towards human capital and global development. *English Language Teaching, 8*(6), 194-200. doi:10.5539/elt.v8n6p194
- O'Neill, S., & Geoghegan, D. (2012). Pre-service teachers' comparative analyses of teacher-/parent-child talk: Making literacy teaching explicit and children's literacy learning

- visible. *International Journal of English Studies*, 12(1), 97-127. Retrieved from <http://revistas.um.es/ijes>
- Oostdam, R., Blok, H., & Boendermaker, C. (2015). Effects of individualized and small-group guided oral reading interventions on reading skills and reading attitude of poor readers in grades 2–4, *Research Papers in Education*, 30(4), 427-450.
doi:10.1080/02671522.2014.953195
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2000). *Measuring student knowledge and skill: The PISA 2000 Assessment of Reading, Mathematical, and Scientific Literacy*. Retrieved from www.oecd.org
- Ortlieb, E., Young, C., & Majors, Y. (2016). Never Too Old: A How-to Guide for Developing Adult Readers' Oral Reading Skills. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 60(2), 213-216.
- Owoh, T.M. (2016). Teacher effectiveness as correlate of students' cognitive achievement at upper basic education in basic technology. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(29), 120-124. Retrieved from www.iiste.org
- Paige, D.D., & Magpuri-Lavell, T. (2014). Reading fluency in the middle and secondary grades. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 7(1), 83. Retrieved from <http://www.iejee.com/>
- Panhwar, A.H., Ansari, S., & Ansari, K. (2016). Sociocultural Theory and its role in the development of language pedagogy. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 7(6), 183-188.

- Papatga, E., & Ersoy, A. (2016). Improving reading comprehension skills through the SCRATCH program. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 9(1), 124-150. Retrieved from <http://www.iejee.com>
- Park, M. (2014). Increasing English Language Learners' engagement in instruction through emotional scaffolding. *Multicultural Education*, 22(1), 20-29.
- Parker, D.C., Grenville, H., & Flessa, J. (2011). Case studies of school community and climate: Success narratives of schools in challenging circumstances. *School Community Journal*, 21(1), 129-150. Retrieved from <http://www.adi.org/journal>
- Pasco, R. J. (2003). *Capital and opportunity: A critical ethnography of students at-risk*. Lanham: MD: University Press of America.
- Patrinos, H.A., & Sakellariou, C. (2015). Adult Literacy, Heterogeneity and Returns to Schooling in Chile. *Education Economics*, 23(1), 122-136.
- Papola-Ellis, A. (2014). Teaching under Policy Cascades: Common Core and Literacy Instruction. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 10(1), 166-187.
- Perry, T. J. (2015). Early depictions of the printing press: A model source. *Printing History*, (18), 27-53.
- Pittman, P., & Honchell, B. (2014). Literature discussion: Encouraging reading interest and comprehension in struggling middle school readers. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 10(2), 118-133. Retrieved from <http://jolle.coe.uga.edu>
- Powell, R., Cantrell, S. C., & Correll, P. (2017). Power and Agency in a High Poverty Elementary School: How Teachers Experienced a Scripted Reading Program. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 13(1), 93-124.

- Poza, L., Brooks, M. D., & Valdés, G. (2014). Entre familia: Immigrant parents' strategies for involvement in children's schooling. *School Community Journal, 24*(1), 119–148.
Retrieved from <http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx>
- Pressley, M., Billman, A. K., Perry, K. H., Reffitt, K. E., & Reynolds, J. M. (Eds.). (2015). *Shaping literacy achievement: Research we have, research we need*. Guilford Publications.
- Probst, R. E. (1987) *Transactional theory in the teaching of literature*. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. Retrieved from <http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-926/theory.htm>
- Puglisi, M. L., Hulme, C., Hamilton, L. G., & Snowling, M. J. (2017). The home literacy environment is a correlate, but perhaps not a cause, of variations in children's language and literacy development. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 21*(6), 498-514.
- Rasinski, T., Paige, D., Rains, C., Stewart, F., Julovich, B., Prenkert, D., & Nichols, W.D. (2017). Effects of intensive fluency instruction on the reading proficiency of third-grade struggling readers. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 1-14*. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/urwl20>
- Rasinski, T.V., Rupley, W. H., Pagie, D. D., & Nichols, W. D. (2016). Alternative text types to improve reading fluency for competent to struggling readers. *International Journal of Instruction, 9*(1), 163-178. Retrieved from <http://www.e-iji.net>
- Rasinski, T.V., & Hoffman, J.V (2003). Oral reading in the school curriculum. *Reading Research Quarterly, 38*, 510-522.

- Rasinski, T.V., Rupley, W.H., Pagie, D.D., & Nichols, W.D. (2016). Alternative text types to improve reading fluency for competent to struggling readers. *International Journal of Instruction*, 9(1), 163-178. Retrieved from <http://www.e-iji.net>
- Reardon, S.F. (2013). The widening income achievement gap. *Educational Leadership*, 70(8), 10-16. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx>
- Renaissance Learning, Inc., (2013). *The Research Foundation for Star Assessments™ The Science of Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.renaissance.com/resources/research/>
- Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2016a). *Star Reading™ Technical Manual*. Retrieved from <http://www.renaissance.com>
- Renaissance Learning, Inc. (2016b). *Renaissance Star 360® reading assessment ®: Score Definitions*. Retrieved from <http://www.renaissance.com>
- Reutzel, D.R., & Cooter, R.B. (2000). *Teaching children to read: Putting the pieces together*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Reutzel, P., Mohr, K. A., & Jones, C. D. (2017). Exploring the relationship between letter recognition and handwriting in early literacy development. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, doi:1468798417728099.
- Reza, G., & Mahmood, D. (2013). Sociocultural theory and reading comprehension: The scaffolding of readers in an EFL context. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 2(3), 67-80. doi:10.5861/ijrsl.2012.183
- Ritchie, S. J., & Bates, T. C. (2013). Enduring links from childhood mathematics and reading achievement to adult socioeconomic status. *Psychological Science*, 24(7), 1301-1308. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/home/pss>

- Rjosk, C., Richter, D., Hochweber, J., Lüdtke, O., Klieme, E., & Stanat, P. (2014). Socioeconomic and language minority classroom composition and individual reading achievement: The mediating role of instructional quality. *Learning and Instruction, 32*, 63-72.
- Roberson, S. (2017). Learning for maximum impact: Four critical but overlooked ideas. *Education, 137*(3), 283-296.
- Rothstein, R. (2004). A wider lens on the black-white achievement gap. *Phi Delta Kappan, 86*(2), 104-110. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/home/pdk>
- Rudasill, K. M., Snyder, K. E., Levinson, H., & Adelson, J. L. (2017). Systems View of School Climate: A theoretical framework for research. *Educational Psychology Review, 1*-26.
- Rumberger, R. W. & Palardy, G. J. (2004). Multilevel models for school effectiveness research. In D. Kaplan (Ed.), *Handbook on Quantitative Methodology for the Social Sciences* (pp. 235-258). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Salem, A. (2017). Scaffolding reading comprehension skills. *English Language Teaching, 10*(1), 97-111. doi:10.5539/elt.v10n1p97
- Samuels, S. J., & Horowitz, R. (2017). The Achievement Gap in Reading: Unique Historical and Future Perspectives. In *The Achievement Gap in Reading* (pp. 23-42). Routledge.
- Saygin, Z. M., Norton, E. S., Osher, D. E., Beach, S. D., Cyr, A. B., Ozernov-Palchik, O., ... & Gabrieli, J. D. (2013). Tracking the roots of reading ability: white matter volume and integrity correlate with phonological awareness in prereading and early-reading kindergarten children. *Journal of Neuroscience, 33*(33), 13251-13258. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.4383-12.2013>

- Scholes, L., Lampert, J., Burnett, B., Comber, B.M., Hoff, L., & Ferguson, A. (2017). The politics of quality teacher discourses: Implications for pre-service teachers in high poverty schools. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(4), 19-43. Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/>
- Seider, S.C., Gillmor, S.C., & Rabinowicz, S.A. (2010). Complicating college students' conception of the American Dream through community service learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 17(1), 5-19. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs/3239521>.
- Seifert, E. H., & Vornberg, J. A. (2003). *The new school leader for the 21st century: The principal*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sénéchal, M. (2006). Testing the Home Literacy Model: Parent involvement in kindergarten is differentially related to grade 4 reading comprehension, fluency, spelling, and reading for pleasure. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 10(1), 59–87. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hssr20>
- Shabani, K., Khatib, M., & Ebadi, S. (2010). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development: Instructional implications and teachers' professional development. *English Language Teaching*, 3(4), 237-248.
- Shannon, P. (1985). Reading instruction and social class. *Language Arts*, 62, 604-613. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/journals/la>
- Sharan, Y. (2010). Cooperative learning for academic and social gains: Valued pedagogy, problematic practice. *European Journal of Education*, 45(2), 300-313. Retrieved from [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1465-3435/issues](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1465-3435/issues)

- Shaver, A. V., & Walls, R. T. (1998). Effect of Title I parent involvement on student reading and mathematics achievement. *Journal of Research & Development in Education*.
- Shaw, D.D., & Hurst, K. (2012). A balanced literacy initiative for one suburban school district in the United States. *Education Research International*, 1-9. doi:10.1155/2012/609271
- Sheils, A. P., & Rutherford, A. (2014). Meaningful mentoring: A source of hope in elementary classrooms in the Mississippi Delta. *Florida Association of Teacher Educators Journal*, 1(14), 1-8.
- Shoaga, O., Akintola, O.A., & Okpor, C.I. (2017). Nurturing reading proficiency of pupils through phonics: Entrepreneurial opportunities for early childhood educators in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(11), 103-108. Retrieved from <http://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP>
- Slavin, R. E. (2011). Effective Reading Programs for Title I Schools. Unpublished manuscript, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Retrieved from <http://literacyconnects.org/img/2013/03/Effective-Reading-Programs-for-Title-1-schools.pdf>
- Smith, K.G., & Foorman, B.R. (2015). *Summer Reading Camp Self-Study Guide*. REL 2015-070. Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/>
- Smith, L.E.; Borkowski, J.G.; Whitman, T.L. (2008). from reading readiness to reading competence: The role of self-regulation in at-risk children. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 12(2), 131-152.
- Smith, T. W. (1987). That which we call welfare by any other name would smell sweeter an analysis of the impact of question wording on response patterns. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51(1), 75-83.

- Snyder, T. D. (1993). *120 years of American education: A statistical portrait*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Sousa, S., & Armor, D. (2016). The effectiveness of Title I: Synthesis of national-level evidence from 1966 to 2013. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(1), 205-311.
doi:10.13189/ujer.2016.040126
- Sparks, R. L., Patton, J., & Murdoch, A. (2014). Early reading success and its relationship to reading achievement and reading volume: replication of '10 years later'. *Reading and Writing*, 27(1), 189-211.
- Standal, T.C., & Towner, J.C. (1982). The "virtues" of round robin reading. *Reading Horizons*, 22(3), 204-206. Retrieved from http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/
- Stevens, E. A., Walker, M. A., & Vaughn, S. (2017). The effects of reading fluency interventions on the reading fluency and reading comprehension performance of elementary students with learning disabilities: A synthesis of the research from 2001 to 2014. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 50(5), 576-590. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219416638028>
- Stiggins, R.J. (2005). *Student-involved classroom assessment for learning* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Stoel-Gammon, C. (2015). The relationship between early lexical and phonological development: What we can learn from children with atypical phonology. In *Conference Program* (p. 35).

- Sturges, K. M. (2015). Curriculum testing on the persistent fringes: Neoliberal policy and the new regime of Title I high school reform. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 46(2), 129-146.
- Suber, C. (2012). Characteristics of effective principals in high-poverty South Carolina elementary schools. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 7(1). Retrieved from <http://www.ncpeapublications.org>
- Swanson, E., Stevens, E. A., Scammacca, N. K., Capin, P., Stewart, A. A., & Austin, C. R. (2017). The impact of tier 1 reading instruction on reading outcomes for students in Grades 4–12: A meta-analysis. *Reading and Writing*, 30(8), 1639-1665.
- Swanson, E.A., Solis, M., Ciullo, S., & McKenna, J. W. (2012). Special education teachers' perceptions and instructional practices in response to intervention implementation. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 35, 115–126. doi:10.1177/0731948711432510
- Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(3), 357-385.
- Tiernan, B., & Kerins, P. (2014). 5. Challenges and Opportunities in Today's Changing Classrooms: Planning to Support the Development of Literacy Skills in the Early Years. *Language, Literacy, and Literature: Re-imagining Teaching and Learning*, 45.
- Toste, J.R., Williams, K.J., & Capin, P. (2017). Reading big words: instructional practices to promote multisyllabic word reading fluency. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 52(5). doi:1053451216676797.
- Tran, V. (2013). Theoretical perspectives underlying the application of cooperative learning in classrooms. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 2 (4). Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1067527.pdf>

- Turkyilmaz, M. (2015). The relationship between reading attitude, metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, personality and self-regulation: A study of modeling. *Education, 136*(1), 11-18.
- Turner, J. & Meyer, D. (2000). Studying and understanding the instructional contexts of classrooms: Using our past to forge our future. *Educational Psychologist, 35*(2), 69-85. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hedp20>
- Ullucci, K., & Howard, T. (2015). Pathologizing the poor: Implications for preparing teachers to work in high-poverty schools. *Urban Education, 50*(2), 170-193.
- United States Department of Agriculture. (2017, August 8). *School meals: Community Eligibility Provision*. Retrieved from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision>
- United States Department of Education. (n.d.). *No Child Left Behind*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=pb>
- Vágvölgyi, R., Coldea, A., Dresler, T., Schrader, J., & Nuerk, H. C. (2016). A review about functional illiteracy: Definition, cognitive, linguistic, and numerical aspects. *Frontiers in Psychology, 7*.
- Valli, L., Stefanski, A., & Jacobson, R. (2016). Typologizing school–community partnerships: A framework for analysis and action. *Urban Education, 51*(7), 719-747.
- Vellutino, F. R. (2003). Individual differences as sources of variability in reading comprehension in elementary school children. In A. P. Sweet & C. E. Snow (Eds.), *Rethinking reading comprehension* (pp. 51-81). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Vincent, C., Tobin, T., & Van Ryzin, M. (2017). Implementing Instructional Practices to Improve American Indian and Alaska Native Students' Reading Outcomes: An

- Exploration of Patterns Across Teacher, Classroom, and School Characteristics. *Journal of Teacher Education*, doi:0022487117702581.
- Voting Rights Act of 1965, Pub. L. 89-110, 79 Stat. 437.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Waddell, C. (2011). School improvement grants: Ransoming Title I schools in distress. *Current Issues in Education*, 14(1). Retrieved from <http://cie.asu.edu/>
- Walker, K.E. (2015). Preschool teachers' constructions of early reading. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, 3(2), 89-100. Retrieved from <http://www.texasreaders.org>
- Walker, M.A., & Stevens, E.A. (2017). Reading instruction for students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 40(1), 17-28. doi:10.1177/0731948716633868
- Wall, H. (2014). When guided reading isn't working: Strategies for effective instruction. *Journal of Language and Literacy Instruction*, 10(2). Retrieved from <http://jolle.coe.uga.edu>
- Wambiri, G.N., & Ndani, M.N. (2015). Relative contributions of caregivers' level of education, role definition and average household income to caregiver involvement in children's emergent reading. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(24), 108-115. Retrieved from <http://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP>
- Wang, C., Berry, B., & Swearer, S. M. (2013). The critical role of school climate in effective bullying prevention. *Theory Into Practice*, 52(4), 296-302.
- Warner, R. M. (2013). *Applied statistics: From bivariate through multivariate techniques* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Warner, G.J., Fay, D., & Spörer, N. (2017). Relations among personal initiative and the development of reading strategy knowledge and reading comprehension. *Frontline Learning Research, 5*(2), 1-23. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14786/flr.v5i2.272>
- Wass, R., & Golding, C. (2014). Sharpening a tool for teaching: The Zone of Proximal Development. *Teaching in Higher Education, 19*(6), 671-684.
- Watson, S.E. (2009). "Good Will Come of This Evil": Enslaved Teachers and the Transatlantic Politics of Early Black Literacy. *College Composition and Communication, 61*(1), W66-W89. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/journals>
- White, T. G., Kim, J. S., Kingston, H. C., & Foster, L. (2014). Replicating the effects of a teacher-scaffolded voluntary summer reading program: The role of poverty. *Reading Research Quarterly, 49*(1), 5-30.
- Whitesell, E.R. (2015). *Do you see what I see? The impact of school accountability on parent, teacher, and student perceptions of the school environment*. Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness. Retrieved from <http://www.sree.org>
- Wilkins, C., Gersten, R., Decker, L.E., Grunden, L., Brasiel, S., Brunnert, K., Jayanthi, M. (2012). *Does a summer reading program based on Lexiles affect reading comprehension?* Final Report. NCEE 2012-4006. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=295>
- Williams, T. T., & Sánchez, B. (2013). Identifying and decreasing barriers to parent involvement for inner-city parents. *Youth & Society, 45*(1), 54-74.
- Wilson, L., McNeill, B., & Gillon, G. T. (2015). The Knowledge and Perceptions of Prospective Teachers and Speech Language Therapists in Collaborative Language and Literacy Instruction. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy, 31*(3), 347-362.

- Wong, K.K. (2008). Federalism revised: The promise and challenge of the No Child Left Behind Act. *Public Administration Review*, 12, 175-185. Retrieved from <https://publicadministrationreview.org/>
- Yazdani, M.M., & Mohammadi, M. (2015). The explicit instruction of reading strategies: directed reading thinking activity vs. guided reading strategies. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 4(3), 53-60.
doi:10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.4n.3p.53
- Yoruk, A. (2016). Students' ideas on cooperative learning method. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(5), 1231-1235. doi:10.13189/ujer.2016.040537
- Young, C. (2018). Increased frequency and planning: A more effective approach to guided reading in Grade 2. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 1-10.
doi:10.1080/00220671.2018.1451814
- Young, J.L. (2017). One book and one girl at a time: Analyzing and explaining black girl's reading achievement in elementary school. *Literacy & Social Responsibility*, 9(1), 3-10. Retrieved from <http://web.csulb.edu/misc/1-sr/ejournal/issues/issues-index.html>
- Zenkov, K., Pellegrino, A., Harmon, J., Ewaida, M., Bell, A., Lynch, M., & Sell, C. (2013). "Picturing" culturally relevant literacy practices: Using photography to see how literacy curricula and pedagogies matter to urban youth. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 15(2). Retrieved from <http://ijme-journal.org/index.php/ijme>
- Zhang, C., Diamond, K. E., & Powell, D. R. (2015). Examining the Content of Head Start Teachers' Literacy Instruction Within Two Activity Contexts During Large-Group Circle Time. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 29(3), 323-337.
doi:10.1080/02568543.2015.1042124

Zurek, A., Torquati, J., & Acar, I. (2014). Scaffolding as a tool for environmental education in early childhood. *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*, 2(1), 27-57.

APPENDIX A**Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Exemption Letter**

June 7, 2018

Dear Hamilton Elijah Smith,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(4), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

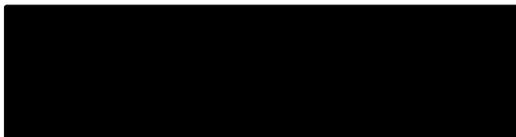
(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at 

Sincerely,



APPENDIX B**Study Site Approval to Conduct Research**

June 4, 2018

Hamilton Smith
Liberty University
Lynchburg, Virginia

Dear Mr. Smith,

The Research Committee met to review your request to conduct research in the [REDACTED] District. On behalf of [REDACTED] Superintendent of Schools, the committee "*has approved*" your request to conduct research. Please use this letter as verification for Liberty University as proof that you have permission to conduct the research outlined in your proposal.

Although the committee did approve your request, we felt compelled to inform you of some changes you may want to make in Chapter 3: Participants and Setting: The participants will be between the ages of 8-9 and not 7-8 since he is referring to third graders. Additionally, you are requesting of us archival data from STAR 360 beginning in the year of 2015-16, but we did not have STAR 360 at that time. Our data for STAR 360 is for the 2017-18 school year. If you still plan to conduct your research using our data, please feel free to contact our district Psychometrician and Statistician, [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] and he will assist you with the data you need.

Please provide the Research, Evaluation, Assessment, and Accountability Office a copy of your research findings once completed so we may have a record of all research carried in our district.

Congratulations as you approach the successful completion of all of your doctorate!

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX C

Vita

HAMILTON ELIJAH SMITH

EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) 2018

Major in Educational Leadership

Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia

Doctoral Dissertation: “A Causal-Comparative Analysis of the Effect of Reading Instruction on the Reading Achievement of Third-Grade Students in Title I Elementary Schools”

Dissertation Committee Chair: Dr. David C. Nelson

Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) 2016

Major in Educational Leadership

Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Master of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) 2015

Major in Physical Education

Canisius College, Buffalo, New York

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) 2012

Major in Integrative Studies

Clayton State University, Morrow, Georgia

EDUCATOR LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) – ID# 1238815

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

English Teacher & MTSS/SST Chair 08/2017 –

English Department Chair (17-18 SY) & ASPIRE Leadership Cohort (18-19 SY) Present

Henry County Board of Education, McDonough, Georgia

Elementary Teacher 08/2015 –

Dekalb County School District, Stone Mountain, Georgia 05/2017

Graduate Teaching Associate 01/2015 –

College of Education, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana 05/2015

Instructional Assistant 01/2015 –

Orleans Parish School Board, New Orleans, Louisiana 05/2015